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**Examining Ibn 'Umar's stance during Fitan times and its impact :
Re-reading his approaches to peace and conflict
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Examining Ibn 'Umar's Stance during *Fitan* Times and its Impact: Re-reading His Approaches to Peace and Conflict

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A thesis submitted in total fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of Doctor of
Philosophy

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Statement of Authorship

This thesis contains no material that has been extracted in whole or in part from a thesis that I have submitted towards the award of any other degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.



Mursal Farman

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Notes on Dates and Transliteration

The English transliteration, spelling, and usage of Arabic words in this thesis follow the guidelines adopted by Encyclopedia of Islam with the exception, like *jīm* and *qāf* which are transliterated as j and q respectively rather than dj and k. Familiar placenames, however, are anglicized. These include Mecca, Medina, Basra, Kufa, Damascus, Hijaz, Syria, Dumat al-Jandal, etc. All Arabic words are italicized for clarity.

Dates (after *hijra*) are always presented with the Hijri date first, Gregorian second, e.g., the battle of Şifḫin took place in 37/657 except for pre-Hijra or post-18th centuries where Hijri date is omitted.

Dedication

To my aunt, Prof. Dr. Mussarat Jamal and Maulana Wahiddudin Khan (d. 2021). Both taught me peace: the former spiritually in my childhood, and the latter rationally in my youth.

Contents	
Statement of Authorship.....	2
Acknowledgements	3
Notes on Dates and Transliteration	4
Dedication	5
Abstract	10
1. Chapter One: Introduction.....	11
1.1 Research Questions	11
1.2 The Area of Research.....	11
1.3 Significance of Research.....	13
1.4 Methodology	14
1.5 Literature Review	16
1.5.1 <i>Hadīth</i>	17
1.5.1.1 Fitān in Ḥadīth Literature	17
1.5.1.2 Ibn ‘Umar: a Prolific Narrator of Ḥadīth.....	18
1.5.1.3 Authenticity of Ḥadīth.....	19
1.5.2 Biographical Literature (<i>tarājim wa ṭabaqāt</i>)	21
1.5.3 <i>Sīrah</i>	25
1.5.4 Historical Literature (<i>tārīkh</i>)	27
1.5.5 Contemporary works	31
1.6 Introduction to <i>Fitān</i>	34
1.6.1 Meaning of <i>Fitān</i>	35
1.6.2 Tribal Rivalry of the Quraysh.....	37
1.6.3 Rivalry between Syria (the Ghassanids) and Iraq (the Lakhmids).....	43
2. Chapter Two: Early Life of Ibn ‘Umar (610-23/644)	46
2.1 Ibn ‘Umar during the Era of the Prophet (610-11/632).....	46
2.1.1 Introduction	46
2.1.2 Life in <i>Ṣuffa</i>	47
2.1.3 Military Career	51
2.1.4 Wedding Attempts.....	58
2.1.5 Love for the Prophet.....	60
2.2 The Reign of Abū Bakr (11/632-13/634)	60
2.3 The Reign of ‘Umar (13/634 - 23/644)	62
2.3.1 Marriage and Family	63

2.3.2	Father-Son Relationship	65
2.4	Physical Appearance	68
2.5	Social Activism	69
2.6	Scholarship	71
3.	Chapter Three: Ibn ‘Umar’s Approach to Politics during the Reigns of Caliphs ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī and Imām Ḥasan (23/644 - 41/661)	82
3.1	The Reign of ‘Uthmān.....	82
3.1.1	Election of ‘Uthmān	83
3.1.2	‘Uthmān as Caliph.....	85
3.1.3	Opposition to ‘Uthmān’s Policies	88
3.1.4	Revolt against ‘Uthmān.....	90
3.2	The Reign of Caliph ‘Alī.....	95
3.2.1	Election as Caliph.....	95
3.2.2	Battle of the Camel.....	96
3.2.3	The Battle of Ṣiffīn and Arbitration	100
3.2.4	The Battle of Nahrawān.....	104
3.3	The Reign of Imām Ḥasan.....	107
3.3.1	Election as Caliph and Abdication	107
3.3.2	Ibn ‘Umar’s Participation in the Peace Treaty	108
3.4	Transfer of the Caliphate from the Senior Companions to the Meccan Tribal Leadership....	110
3.4.1	Transfer of Caliphate to the Tribal Elders	110
3.4.2	Causes of Tribal Elders’ Migration to Medina	111
3.4.3	The Difference between the Early Converts (<i>al-Sābiqūn</i>) and the Tribal Leaders	113
4.	Chapter Four: Ibn ‘Umar during the Umayyad Dynasty I - Sufyanid Era (41/662 – 64/684)	116
4.1	The Reign of Mu‘āwiya	116
4.1.1	Mu‘āwiya as Ruler	117
4.1.2	Ibn ‘Umar’s Socio-Religious Activities	120
4.1.3	Ibn ‘Umar versus Mu‘āwiya’s Nomination of Yazīd.....	124
4.1.4	Mu‘āwiya’s Reaction to Ibn ‘Umar’s Position.....	129
4.2	The Reigns of Yazīd and Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd	133
4.2.1	Succession and Revolt.....	133
4.2.3	Ibn ‘Umar on Yazīd’s Caliphate.....	135
4.2.2	Ibn ‘Umar and Imām Ḥusayn.....	136
4.2.4	The Reign of Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd.....	141

5.	Chapter Five: Ibn ‘Umar’s Resistance to Tribalistic Politics during the Umayyad Dynasty II - Marwanid Era (64/684 – 73/693).....	143
5.1	The Reign of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam.....	143
5.1.1	Marwān as Caliph.....	143
5.1.2	Accession, Campaigns and Death of Marwān.....	145
5.2	The Reign of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān.....	147
5.2.1	Accession and Campaigns.....	147
5.2.2	‘Abd al-Malik as Caliph.....	147
5.2.4	Ibn ‘Umar in ‘Abd al-Malik’s Reign.....	148
5.2.3.1	Ibn ‘Umar and Religious Nature of Allegiance.....	149
5.2.3.2	Allusion to Ḥudaybiya during Wars in Ḥajj.....	150
5.2.3.3	“We fought until there was no more fitnah”.....	152
5.2.3.4	“Not in the way God but in the way of the Qurash youths”.....	153
5.2.3.5	Criticism and Countercriticism.....	155
5.2.3.6	“Even slaughtering as many sheep is excess”.....	157
5.2.3.7	“Whose sins outnumber the sins of jinn and mankind”.....	158
5.2.3.8	The Two Takbirs.....	159
5.2.3.9	“Confronting a danger beyond one’s capacity”.....	160
5.2.3.10	Ibn ‘Umar vs. Ḥajjāj.....	161
6.	Chapter Six: Ibn ‘Umar’s Legacy during Post-Ibn ‘Umar Period.....	165
6.1	Impact of Ibn ‘Umar’s Stance on the Influential Figures.....	165
6.1.1	Ibn ‘Umar’s Position among the Companions.....	166
6.1.2	Ibn ‘Umar’s Acknowledged Stance during the Time of the Companions.....	168
6.1.3	Successors’ (<i>tābi ‘ūn</i>) Endorsement of Ibn ‘Umar’s Stance.....	171
6.1.4	Popularity of Ibn ‘Umar’s Views amongst the Followers of the Successors (<i>Tābi ‘ū al-Tābi ‘ūn</i>).....	184
6.2	<i>Fitan</i> Events: Comparison of Ibn ‘Umar’s Stance with the Standpoint of <i>Ahl al-Sunnah</i> ..	190
6.2.1	<i>Ahl al-Sunnah</i> on <i>Fitan</i>	190
6.2.2	‘Uthmān’s Assassination.....	192
6.2.3	The battles fought during the reign of Caliph ‘Alī.....	194
6.2.4	Abdication of Imām Ḥasan.....	198
6.2.5	The Reign of Yazīd.....	202
6.2.6	The Reign of the Umayyads.....	204
7.	Chapter Seven: Ibn ‘Umar and Leadership.....	207
7.1	Ibn ‘Umar’s Personality.....	208

7.2	Ibn ‘Umar’s Leadership Features	211
7.2.1	Leadership Background.....	211
7.2.2	Non-Traditional Leadership	213
7.2.3	Ibn ‘Umar and Conflict	214
7.2.4	Creative Approach to Problem Solving.....	215
7.2.5	Ibn ‘Umar and Dialogue.....	216
7.2.6	Motivation of Conflicting Entities.....	216
7.2.7	A Balanced leadership.....	217
7.2.8	Controlling High Emotions	218
7.2.9	Equilibrium between Confrontation and Unity	219
7.2.10	A Perfectionist-cum-Pragmatic	220
7.2.11	The Two Roles and Gradual Support	220
7.3	Ibn ‘Umar’s Leadership Style	221
7.3.1	Prophetic leadership	221
7.3.2	<i>Mujaddid</i> Leadership.....	222
	Conclusion and Suggestions.....	227

Abstract

Conflict over the Caliphate after the assassination of the third Caliph, ‘Uthmān b. ‘Affān (d. 35/656), has remained a matter of serious concern amongst the Muslim academia and intellectual circles. This conflict resulted in schism among Muslims and caused two series of civil wars. These wars seem to have been a conflict of approaches (theological, socio-political and tribal) towards the Caliphate.

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar (610 – 73/693), a famous companion of the Prophet, opted for an approach distinct from the prevailing various approaches. Besides his meritorious active role in restoration of peace and harmony, Ibn ‘Umar is a prominent scholar too. His command over the traditional Islamic disciplines (*tafsīr*, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *sīrah*, *tārīkh*, etc) is exemplary. His life, traditions, viewpoints, and activities are prominently highlighted in the Islamic literatures.

Despite the mention of Ibn ‘Umar in many sources reporting his peace promoting efforts, however, there is no comprehensive analytical research focusing on his role for the restoration of peace and harmony, its impact upon contemporary people and legacy in post-Ibn ‘Umar period. There seems to be a gap which this study aims to fill through a critical analysis of his views, activities and dealing with *fitan* through different measures.

This dissertation deals with three aspects of Ibn ‘Umar’s life. First, the positive role that he played during the period of *fitan*. On the ground of the extensive Islamic literature in Arabic, English and Urdu languages, an attempt has been made to examine the nuances of his approaches to *fitan* through a chronological study of his life. Second, the impact of Ibn ‘Umar’s role during post-Ibn ‘Umar period. Based on the analysis of the comments on his approaches in *fitan* and on the comparison of his views with that of *Ahl al-Sunnah*, an effort has been exerted to measure his influence on later Muslim generations. Third is the leadership model that Ibn ‘Umar offers. On the account of the analysis of his leadership moments specially in *fitan* times and its comparison with leadership styles, it is aimed to examine his leadership style. Thus, this study argues that with his thoughts and leadership in the times of *fitan*, Ibn ‘Umar left deep impression on future generations.

1. Chapter One: Introduction

1.1 Research Questions

Main Question

Examining the status of Ibn 'Umar's approach to *fitan*: Is it *tajdīdic* (renewalist)?

Sub-Questions

1. What are the nuances of Ibn 'Umar's approaches to *fitan* in his lifespan (what can chronological reading of his life provide in relation to *fitan* wars)?
2. What is the legacy of Ibn 'Umar during post-Ibn 'Umar period and its impact upon the formation of later Islamic jurisprudence and theology regarding Muslim leadership (Imamate)?
3. Can Ibn 'Umar be considered a *renewalist* in the context of *fitan*?

1.2 The Area of Research

Fitan is an important subject associated with different disciplines of Islamic studies, inter alia, *ḥadīth*, *sīrah* and *tārīkh*. According to Islamic theology, it encompasses all intrinsic and extrinsic drives (love, uncertainty, and fear) that can possibly move one away from the right path.¹ This subject is also related to Islamic apocalyptic literature which deals with the Prophet's divinations about the troubles/punishments that may visit humanity as a consequence of moral degradation.

The scope of this research is limited to only one area of *fitan*, that is the Muslim civil wars which took place between the years 34/655 and 73/692 after the assassination of Caliph, 'Uthmān b. 'Affān. In this area, the research specifically focuses on the intermediary and

¹ Muhammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al- 'Arab* [Arabic Lexicon] (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1993), XIII, 319; al-Ḥusayn b. Muḥammad al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt fī Ghariḥ al-Qur'ān* [Dictionary of the Qur'ānic Terms] (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1992), 623; 'Abd al-Wāḥid Idrīs al-Idrīsī, *Fiqh al-Fitan* [Understanding *Fitan*] (Riyadh: Maktabat Dār al-Minhāj, 2007), 23-34.

reconciliatory approach of a famous companion of Prophet Muhammad, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar for any possible and peaceful solution to resolve the disastrous conflict primarily between two approaches i.e., the post-prophetic theological and pre-Islamic traditional tribal approaches towards establishment of the Caliphate.

There were numerous personal and social factors involved in the formation of Ibn ‘Umar’s personality that helped him play the role of an intermediary, among them are his pious and contemplating nature, affiliation to an influential tribe of Arabia that enjoyed a prestigious place in society since pre-Islamic times, close association with the Prophet and grooming by a very strict and genius father ‘Umar, the second Caliph.

Primary and secondary sources seem to have agreed upon the integrity of Ibn ‘Umar’s religious and moral bearing, his involvement in most of the *fitan* events and his positive role during this period. Similarly, sources contain traditions that quote his remarks on different incidents of *fitan* and scattered anecdotes that uncover the acceptability of his stance among people in a later stage. However, his stance has not been given the worth it really deserves. It may be because his position reflects some kind of passivism which was against the nature of the then-Arab society, or its content led to clashes with the personalities who were viewed stronger than Ibn ‘Umar, or his approaches did not support the Hashemites and the Umayyads, the ruling dynasties of the Muslim communities for the next many centuries. Another reason is religious in nature and part of the creed of the mainstream Muslims, *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah* (the majority who represent 85 to 90 % of the whole Muslim world).² It advocates silence on the disputes and battles that occurred among the companions of the Prophet without disrespecting anyone.³ The Prophet himself has been reported to strictly forbid his junior companions (later converts to Islam) from using any abusive language against his senior companions.⁴ These directives of the Prophet in favour of senior companions were later taken for all the companions

² Frederick Denny, *Sunni Islam: Oxford Bibliographies Online Research Guide* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 3.

³ Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-‘Aqīdah al-Wāsiṭiyah* [Islamic Creed] (Riyadh: ‘Aḍwā’ al-Salaf, 1999), 120.

⁴ Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Jāmi’ al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtaṣar min ‘Umūr Rasūl Allāh wa Sunanih wa ‘Ayyāmih: Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [The Authentic, Abridged, Chain-Supported Collection Regarding Matters Pertaining to the Messenger of Allah, his Traditions, and his Times] (Cairo: Dār Tawq al-Najāh, 2001), no. 3663; Muslim b. al-Ḥajjāj al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Musnad al-Sahīh al-Mukhtaṣar min al-Sunan bi Naql al-‘Adl ‘an al-‘Adl ‘an Rasūl Allāh : Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* [The Authentic, Abridged, Chain-Supported Sunnah Collection] (Beirut: Dār Ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī), no. 2540.

irrespective of their seniority. Thus, remaining silent and calm about *mushājarāt al-ṣaḥābah* (disputes and battles among the Prophet's companions) was preferred and considered a no-go area. What this research aims to establish is that Ibn 'Umar's peace-building thoughts and approaches towards early Muslim civil wars have rich potentialities and whose leadership is equally relevant today as it was in the 1st/7th century.

1.3 Significance of Research

This study examines Ibn 'Umar's role to ward off *fitan* in eight major areas: First and foremost, he stands out amongst the *ṣaḥābah* (companions of the Prophet) for his peace promotion measures. His acumen for resolving bloody feuds with his distinctly knowledgeable stance wins him a prominent place amongst his contemporaries. During the civil wars, the Muslim leadership faced internal turmoil and conflicts that led to rifts and divided opinions. Thus, Ibn 'Umar's peacebuilding measures to bring cohesion and harmony needs special attention as it broadens the scope and understanding of how conflicts may be resolved peacefully.

Second is the appraisal of Ibn 'Umar's life in the historical context in a way that sheds light on his role during *fitan*. This will provide a historical background to many reports and anecdotes, people's remarks on Ibn 'Umar and his reaction in different situations. More importantly, it offers a framework for the analysis of numerous conflicting or undecided historical incidents and opinions and also gives an opportunity to opt for the one closer to reality.

Examining Ibn 'Umar's life with a focus on his role during *fitan* years in the historical context shall lay a basis for research in other related areas of investigation: Third, critical examination of Ibn 'Umar's views and methodology for peacebuilding and strategies to deal with the members of different rival groups and states; Fourth, the key personalities who came under the influence of his thinking pattern and propagated his views; Fifth, Ibn 'Umar's heritage in post Ibn 'Umar's period i.e., how and in what way his approach had affected the mainstream Muslims (*Ahl al-Sunnah*).

Sixth, it is hoped that the findings of this research shall contribute to methodological, theological, and socio-political discourses on approaches to leadership by examining Ibn 'Umar's legacy in the historical context. Seventh, this research covers enormous material written in Arabic, Urdu, and English (along with translations of some Turkish works) in its analysis of Ibn 'Umar's activities during the *fitan*. Thus, this research is original not only because of its findings but also rich materials and references used in it. Last but not the least, the findings of this study may humbly contribute to promote peace, co-existence, and harmony.

The modern world today especially the Muslim societies has an immense scope for learning from Ibn ‘Umar’s participatory and synergetic approach.

1.4 Methodology

The academic cum intellectual study of Islamic theology and history in the Western scholarship can be divided into two broad but distinct methodologies: traditionalists and revisionists.⁵ The main feature of the traditionalist approach is to rely on, to some extent, the credibility and accuracy of classical Islamic sources such as *ḥadīth* (prophetic traditions), *sīrah* (biography of the Prophet) and *tārīkh* (history). For scholars who opt for this approach, the traditional Islamic transmission of knowledge (despite certain deficiencies) has a solid core i.e., the ascertaining of appropriate source through a tough critical method.⁶ The Sceptic or Revisionist approach, though they are not uniform, is in agreement in rejecting the historical reliability and legitimacy of accounts based on what classical and traditionalist Islamic scholarship consider to be truth derived from Islamic sources. In brief, to them no fact about the status of a certain theme in Islamic tradition can be gained with the exception of a serious critical re-reading of the sources; the necessity to look at these sources in light of external accounts and works of sectarian milieu; and the employment of contemporary material evidence.⁷ In this research, I have neither accepted every single traditionalist view and source as completely reliable and authentic, nor considered them to be totally fictitious. In other words, I will try to exert utmost effort to find out *via media*.

Following the middle way approach, I have employed a method in relation to the classical sources that is both diachronic (historical) and synchronic (textual). There is no need to place an extra emphasis on the necessity of the historical research methods in this study of *ḥadīth*, *sīrah* and *tārīkh*. In a broad sense, historical criticism refers to looking at the historical conditions and events of a period in that a text or tradition was gradually produced or developed. In the case of Ibn ‘Umar’s status during the civil wars and his relations to the *fitan* narratives, it has been observed that it creates many theological debates leading to certain socio-political circumstances that spark those discussions. In this respect, the reports, narratives, and historical anecdotes used in this study will be evaluated first in accordance with established *ḥadīth* and

⁵ It is, however, worth mentioning that there is a small minority of researchers who stand between these two extremes, like Motzki (d. 2019), Gregor Schoeler, etc.

⁶ Hebert Berg, *Method and Theory in the Study of Islamic Origins*, (Leiden: Brill: 2003), 21.

⁷ Uri Rubin, *The Eye of the Beholder* (Princeton: The Darwin Press, 1995), 3.

sīrah methodology such as *matn* critique, *sanad* critique (reliability of the chain of the report). It is safe to assume that a lot of work has already been done by traditionists, biographers and historians for the authentication of the primary texts on *ḥadīth*, *sīrah*, biographical and historical works which makes it easy to know the perspective of each type on a certain issue. However, the use of the perspectives and analysis of modern historical-critical and methodological approaches will neither be neglected. Thus, applying compare-and-contrast technique to different types will be helpful to reveal the overall picture or the extent of agreement and disagreement of the sources. It is also important to remember that generally, Ibn ‘Umar’s views do not exist in the form of long orations or sermons; instead, they do not exceed length of a (few) paragraph(s) throughout the *fitan* periods. Acceptability of his views at a later stage realizes need of an historical analytical study regardless of their length.

Regarding synchronic reading, I will mainly deal with text-focused approach. One of the best methods for this type of approaches to the text is *content analysis* or *discourse analysis*. Content analysis - as Bernard Berelson elucidates it - is “a research technique for the objective, systematic, and qualitative description of the manifest content of communications.”⁸ This analysis will help the researcher to make proper inferences from the texts of *sīrah* and history sources to the contexts of their use.⁹ Discourse analysis is a broad term for the study of the ways in which language is used between people, both in written texts and spoken contexts. In contrast to other areas of language study that might look at individual parts of language, such as words and phrases (grammar) or the pieces that make up words (linguistics), discourse analysis looks at a running conversation that may involve a speaker and listener (or a writer’s text and its reader). In other words, discourse analysis looks at conversations in their social context.¹⁰

This study aims to trace Ibn ‘Umar’s multi-dimensional approach towards the *fitan* events narrated in the primary sources that mostly are in Arabic and in the secondary sources available in Arabic, Urdu, and English. The diversity of the primary sources makes the content and discourse analysis very suitable apparatuses to understand many reports and other information about Ibn ‘Umar’s life and activities. Since the analysis of these activities will lead us to comprehend Ibn ‘Umar’s approaches to the conflict, his peacebuilding, peaceful coexistence of

⁸ Bernard Berelson, *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (New York: Free Press, 1952), 74.

⁹ Klaus Krippendorff, *Content Analysis: An Introduction to Its Methodology* (California: Sage Publications, 2004), 18.

¹⁰ Richard Nordquist, "Understanding the Use of Language Through Discourse Analysis." *ThoughtCo*, Aug. 26, 2020, [thoughtco.com/discourse-analysis-or-da-1690462](https://www.thoughtco.com/discourse-analysis-or-da-1690462).

religious and social harmony, political stability, etc., the need for comprehensive analysis of these texts related to Ibn ‘Umar becomes apparent. At this juncture, it is also important to highlight an important similarity that while approaching this subject in the light of peace and leadership in an Islamic perspective and its implementation/application by Western models of leadership has already been elaborated by Abu Nimer,¹¹ Rafik Issa Beekun and Jamal A. Badawi.¹² The same has been undertaken by Helen Doohan in the context of Christianity.¹³ However, hereby Ibn ‘Umar’s leadership and his dealing with conflicts and peace building measures are focused alone. Thus, an attempt is made to re-evaluate his position amongst the contemporary Muslims and broaden their understanding of peaceful co-existence and that how close it is to Islam.

Although there is a general consensus amongst almost all sources about the positive role of Ibn ‘Umar during these events, it has been observed that different sources depict different aspects of his approach for procuring political stability, religious harmony, tolerance, social security and peaceful coexistence. This depiction exists in the form of scattered traditions quoting small anecdotes in various sources. This research will collect, contextualize, connect, and analyze these scattered materials for the overall picture of his approach in the light of the above-mentioned methodological framework.

1.5 Literature Review

A brief review of those works is hereby presented that deal with Ibn ‘Umar’s stance to different events of *fitan* and his methodology to secure political stability, mutual coexistence, and socio-religious harmony. There is not a single book in primary sources that exclusively addresses Ibn ‘Umar’s mediatory role. However, content on this subject lies scattered as an unintended by-product of other themes in the huge corpus of Islamic literature. This corpus indirectly alludes to the theme of our study when it explores the subject of *fitan* or discusses the life of Ibn ‘Umar.

The literature review will first introduce the important primary sources in a chronological order along with a brief report of the material it contains and how it contributes to this study. Then, it shall discuss the secondary sources that touch upon our research. *Hadīth* takes precedence

¹¹ Mohammed Abu-Nimer, *Nonviolence and peace building in Islam: Theory and practice* (Florida: University Press of Florida, 2003).

¹² Rafik Issa Beekun and Jamal A. Badawi, *Leadership: An Islamic Perspective* (US: Amana, 1999).

¹³ Helen Doohan, *Contrast in Prophetic Leadership: Isaiah and Jeremiah*, *Biblical Theology Bulletin: Journal of Bible and Culture* (Vol. 13, Issue 2, 1983), 42. <<https://doi.org/10.1177/014610798301300202>>.

when it comes to authenticity.

1.5.1 *Ḥadīth*

Ḥadīth has played a vital role in the formation of Islamic civilization and much has been written elucidating its significance.¹⁴ The discussion here will concentrate more on Ibn ‘Umar’s role during the period of *fitan*. *Ḥadīth* is defined as the ‘narration of the sayings, actions and approval of the Prophet, his acquiescence to the words or actions of others or description of Prophet’s physical or moral attributes.’¹⁵ In other words, *ḥadīth* mainly signifies guidance of the Prophet. However, in the absence of a *ḥadīth* of the Prophet, actions of his companions may also be referred to more specifically to the first four guided caliphs.¹⁶ Thus, *ḥadīths* not only deals with the life of the Prophet Muhammad but also of his companions.¹⁷ Some other factors that make *ḥadīth* indispensable for this study are as follows:

1.5.1.1 *Fitan in Ḥadīth Literature*

The fact that *ḥadīth* covers life of the companions and the early Islamic history, makes it an important source about *fitan*. Similarly, the coincidence of *ḥadīth* compilation with the outbreak of *fitan* wars further add to its worth. As an example, we can take *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* to describe the degree of vitalness of *ḥadīth* literature in early Islamic history and *fitan* wars. One may find important incidents reported therein, e.g., assassination of the Caliph ‘Umar,¹⁸ appointment of ‘Uthmān as the new caliph,¹⁹ the status of Abū Dharr (d. 32/652) in ‘Uthmān’s reign,²⁰ assassination of the Caliph ‘Uthmān,²¹ battles of the Camel,²² Ṣiffīn,²³ and Nahrawān,²⁴ arbitration between ‘Alī

¹⁴ Jonathan A. C. Brown, *Misquoting Muhammad* (London: Oneworld Publications, 2014), 6.

¹⁵ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Tadrīb al-Rāwī fī Sharḥ Taqrīb al-Nawāwī* [A Commentary on Yahyā ibn Sharaf al-Nawawī’s Treatise on the Science of Tradition Entitled *al-Taqrīb wa al-Taysīr*] (Riyadh: Dār al-Ṭayyibah, 2006), 26-27; Muhammad al-‘Uthaymīn, *Muṣṭalah al-Ḥadīth* [*Ḥadīth Terminology*] (Cairo: Maktabat al-‘Ilm, 1994), 5; Daniel W. Brown, *Rethinking Tradition in Modern Islamic Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, n.d.), 6.

¹⁶ Jean Sauvaget, *Introduction to the History of the Muslim East: A Bibliographical Guide*, (California: University of California Press, 1965), 25; Muḥammad b. Yazīd Ibn Mājāh, *al-Sunan* [Prophetic Traditions] (Cairo: Dār ‘Iḥyā’ al-Kutub al-‘Arabiyah, n.d.), no. 42.

¹⁷ Sauvaget, *Introduction to the History*, 25.

¹⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 965, 967.

¹⁹ *Ibid*, no. 3700.

²⁰ *Ibid*, no. 1406.

²¹ *Ibid*, no. 4024.

²² *Ibid*, no. 3129, 3772, 7083.

²³ *Ibid*, no. 3181, 4189, 5362, 7308.

²⁴ *Ibid*, no. 3610.

(d. 40/641) and Mu‘āwiyah (d. 60/680),²⁵ Mu‘āwiyah’ attempts to take pledge of allegiance for Yazīd (d. 64/683) ²⁶ and schism after his death,²⁷ the revolt against Yazīd,²⁸ martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn (d. 61/680),²⁹ the reign of Marwān (d. 65/685),³⁰ pledge of allegiance of Ibn Zubayr (d. 73/692),³¹ incident of Ḥarrah,³² death of Ibn Zubayr,³³ pledge of allegiance of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān (d. 86/705),³⁴ his reign,³⁵ Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf (d. 95/714) in his governorship over Medina³⁶. The books of *ḥadīth* simultaneously record traditions about the peacebuilding efforts of Ibn ‘Umar in almost every incident of *fitan* from the assassination of his father, ‘Umar till his death in the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik.³⁷

1.5.1.2 *Ibn ‘Umar: a Prolific Narrator of Ḥadīth*

Ibn ‘Umar is the second most prolific narrator next to Abū Hurayra (d. 59/678) with a total of 2630 traditions reported by him.³⁸ This makes his status very distinguished in early Islamic history. His childhood and early conversion to Islam on the hands of the Prophet, his further grooming through his father ‘Umar and sister Ḥafṣa after the Prophet’s demise, his observation and learning from senior companions (*ṣaḥābah*) and his keen aptitude for learning all turned him into a man of letters and wisdom. His intellectual piety and excellence, his command over *fiqh* and other socio-religious affairs was exemplary. Moreover, his selfless and pious life and distance from factional strife provided him enough time to become an important source for the seekers of *ḥadīths*. His utmost care in matters related to *ḥadīth* and the meticulous scrutiny has

²⁵ Ibid, no. 4108.

²⁶ Ibid, no. 4827.

²⁷ Ibid, no. 7112.

²⁸ Ibid, no. 2959, 7111.

²⁹ Ibid, no. 3110.

³⁰ Ibid, no. 956, 1309.

³¹ Ibid, no. 4665.

³² Ibid, no. 4906.

³³ Ibid, no. 3973.

³⁴ Ibid, no. 7272.

³⁵ Ibid, no. 1664.

³⁶ Ibid, no. 560.

³⁷ Ibid, no. 965-67, 1662-63, 1639-40, 1659, 1708, 3700, 4108, 4513-14, 7111.

³⁸ Muhammad Jamāl al-Dīn al-Qāsimī, *Qawā‘id al-Taḥdīth min Funūn Muṣṭalaḥ al-Ḥadīth* [*Ḥadīth Terminology*] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), 72.

made his reported narrations even more valuable.³⁹

1.5.1.3 Authenticity of Ḥadīth

Muslims believe that Prophet Muhammad has left two sources: the Qur'ān and the ḥadīth. The Qur'ān itself proclaims divine protection from any kind of corruption.⁴⁰ But the same is not claimed in favour of ḥadīth literature anywhere in the Qur'ān or ḥadīth. However, a *mutawātir* (mass transmitted) prophetic tradition declares fabrication in ḥadīth a serious offense and theologically speaking a punishable act in the hereafter.⁴¹ Thus, contrary to the Qur'ān, the Prophet had fears of attributing lies to him (in ḥadīth).

The Prophet being “the single most dominant figure in the Islamic religious and legal tradition”, therefore, telling lies about him could result in political and tribal gains.⁴² As long as the senior companions of the Prophet were in command during the reign of the first three caliphs, forgery was strictly condemned. But after the breakout of civil wars between Caliph ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya, it became a serious problem and “the Prophet’s words were used as ammunitions”.⁴³ With the passage of time, forgery in ḥadīth was also used in matters of political and sectarian conflicts, legal and theological debates, all sorts of chauvinisms, entertainment of the crowd at the street, religious and moral motivation.⁴⁴

To evade this problem and distinguish the authentic from the fabricated ḥadīths, scholars developed disciplines of *riwāyah* (study of ḥadīth text or narration) and *dirāyah* (study of chains and conditions of ḥadīths or rationality) for the critical study of the chains of the transmitters (*sanad*) and the text (*matn*). This led to the development of biographical literature to support traditionists in ḥadīth criticism.⁴⁵

³⁹ Muḥammad Zubayr Ṣiddīqī, *Hadith Literature, its Origin, Development and Special Features* (Cambridge: The Islamic Texts Society, 1993), 20; Muḥammad Rawās Qalājī, *Mawsū‘ah Fiqh ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar: ‘Aṣruḥ wa Ḥayātuhu* [Encyclopedia of Jurisprudential Views of ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar] (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā’is, 1986), 21-25.

⁴⁰ al-Qur’ān 15: 9.

⁴¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 1291.

⁴² Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muhammad's Legacy*, 69-77.

⁴³ Nūr al-Dīn ‘Itr, *Manhaj al-Naqd fī ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* [Criticism in Ḥadīth Sciences] (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1997), 55; Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muhammad's Legacy*, 69-77.

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Sayedah Ismā‘īl Kāshif, *Maṣādir al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī wa Manāhij al-Baḥth fīh* [Sources of Islamic History and Methods of Research in it] (Beirut: Dār al-Rā’id al-‘Arabī, 1960), 32-33.

Muslim scholars have generally considered *ḥadīth* literature as the most important source next on to the Qur'ān to study any aspect of the life of Prophet Muhammad or of his companions.⁴⁶ The most important reason is the research work done by the traditionists (*muḥaddithīn*) for the authentication of *ḥadīth* literature. Traditional scholars do not deny penetration of fabricated material into the corpus of *ḥadīth*, yet they hold that implementation of the disciplines of *ḥadīth* criticism can eliminate fabrication.

Since early Islamic history, there have been schools of thought who differ in the traditional approach to *ḥadīth*. For example, a group of Khawārij (an extremist sect) refuted some rulings of *ḥadīths* because they did not exist in the Qur'ān.⁴⁷ Similarly, *ahl al-kalām* (rationalist theologians) have argued that *ḥadīth* “does not accurately reflect Prophetic example” and Mu'tazilah (a rationalist group) also “maintained a degree of skepticism with regard to *ḥadīth*”.⁴⁸ In the 19th and 20th centuries, a similar wave of the Qur'ānists (claimers that pure Islam is found only in the Qur'ān) emerged in sub-Continent and Egypt. Both “may be viewed as the product of conflict within” *ahl al-ḥadīth* (claimers of *ḥadīth*'s authoritative position in Islam as opposed to juristic schools). However, these voices have not attracted a “large following”.⁴⁹

The Western scholarship of *ḥadīth* started in the 19th century by the scholars - known as the orientalist - who express a skeptical outlook towards *ḥadīth* but accept its general structure. Their criticism of *ḥadīth* receives elicited responses from some non-Muslim and Muslim scholars trained in the West. Based on their assumptions, the greater narrative of early Islamic history, the origins of the Qur'ān and of Islamic law are also questioned by some Western scholars in the late 1970s. This receives an unprecedented defense of the traditional narrative of *ḥadīths* and Islamic origins on part of certain Western scholars. The gist of Western scholarship on the question of authenticity of early Islamic history has been summarized by Jonathan Brown into four stages.⁵⁰

⁴⁶ 'Abd al-Razzāq Harmās, *Masādir al-Sīrah al-Nabawīyyah bayn al-Muḥaddīthīn wa al-Mu'arrikhīn* [Comparison of the Views of Traditionists and Historians on Sources of *Ṣīrah*] (Morocco: Ibn Zahr University, 2007), 76-85.

⁴⁷ Muḥammad al-Shahrastānī, *al-Milal wa al-Niḥal* [Book of Religious and Philosophical Sects] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Ḥalbī, n.d.), I,121.

⁴⁸ Brown, *Rethinking tradition*, 15.

⁴⁹ *Ibid*, 38-42.

⁵⁰ **1-** The Orientalists Approach: the initial application of the Historical Critical Method to early Islamic history, which challenges many features of the traditional Islamic legal and historical narratives but accepts its general structure. **2-** The Philo-Islamic Apology: the arguments of some non-Muslim and Muslim scholars trained in the West responding to Orientalist critiques of *ḥadīths*. **3-** The Revisionist Approach: beginning in the late

He concludes that “Muslim *ḥadīth* tradition is much more sophisticated than was previously believed”.⁵¹

Even though *ḥadīth* literature is considered to be the most authentic after the Qur’ān, however, this genre contributes to this research indirectly. Moreover, the available material is in disarray in numerous chapters of *ḥadīth* books and without any social or chronological context. Similarly, traditionists’ strict methodological principles for accepting traditions keep a large amount of data out of *ḥadīth* literature that later becomes part of *sīrah*, biographical and historical literature. Therefore, notwithstanding the authenticity, the use of *ḥadīths* in this research is not only very challenging but also it can provide a small piece of the complete picture of Ibn ‘Umar’s stance towards *fitan*. Thus, the need of making use of other sources arises.

1.5.2 Biographical Literature (*tarājim wa ṭabaqāt*)

The traditionists who compiled *ḥadīth* collections, they also compiled material on the lives of the medium (transmitters) through which *ḥadīth* literature had reached them. That is why most authors of *ḥadīth* compilations also have books in the field of biographical literature. Imām Aḥmad’s *al-‘Asmā’ wa al-Kunā*, Imām Bukhārī’s *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, Imām Muslim’s *al-Ṭabaqāt* and Imām al-Nasā’ī’s *al-Ṭabaqāt* and the like. However, more comprehensive biographical dictionaries are that of Ibn Sa‘d (d. 230/844)’s *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā*, al-Baghawī (d. 317/929)’s *Mu‘jam al-Ṣaḥabah*, Abū Nu‘aym al-‘Iṣbahānī (d. 430/1038)’s *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥabah*, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr (d. 463/1070)’s *al-‘Iṣṭī‘āb*, Ibn al-Athīr (d. 630/1233)’s *‘Usud al-Ghābah*, al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348)’s *Siyar ‘A‘lām al-Nubalā’* and Ibn Ḥajar (d. 852/1449)’s *al-Iṣābah*. In the following lines, these dictionaries are discussed with reference to our subject in a chronological order:

1970s, this approach applied the critical assumptions of the Orientalist Approach at a more basic level and questioned the greater narrative of early Islamic history, the origins of the Quran and of Islamic law. 4- The Western Revaluation: since the 1980s, this approach has rejected the extremes of the Revisionist Approach while continuing criticism of the early Islamic period according to the Historical Critical Method. Rejecting the radical skepticism of the Revisionists, however, has led some Western scholars to recognize both that the Orientalist method involves some questionable assumption and also that the Muslim *ḥadīth* tradition is much more sophisticated than previously believed. (Brown, *Ḥadīth: Muhammad's Legacy*, 204-239)

⁵¹ Ibid, 204.

Ibn Sa‘d’s *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* (The Book of the Major Classes)⁵² is the first important work of its kind. Ibn Sa‘d is a prominent scholar of *ḥadīth* trusted by Ibn Abī Ḥātim and Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī.⁵³ His book *al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* is probably the most significant one in this genre and provides a key domestic and scholarly information about an extensive range of biographies of important figures: Prophet Muhammad, his companions and the successors which otherwise is rarely found in *ḥadīth* literature.⁵⁴

This book discusses Ibn ‘Umar and his narrations in almost 50 pages.⁵⁵ A large amount of scattered data of *ḥadīth* books is hereby presented in order, for instance, events of his childhood and youth, anecdotes describing his personality, relationship with the Prophet and his service to Islam. There are several narrations on his peaceful struggle for the promotion of reconciliation during civil wars.⁵⁶ In a narration, Ibn ‘Umar has been quoted to have said in his old age that he did not find himself grieved on any worldly matter except that he did not fight against the rebellious tyrant group”.⁵⁷ However the “tyrant group” has not been defined. Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on *fitan* has also been reported to have found acceptability among the elite and the public in the later period of his life and duly applauded by a number of people.⁵⁸ Probably, the most powerful comment on his position is made by ‘Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/744), “Ibn ‘Umar was counted amongst the scholars of *fitan*, *كَانَ ابْنُ عُمَرَ يُعَدُّ مِنْ فُقَهَاءِ الْأَحْدَاثِ*”.⁵⁹ This is a significant anecdote on Ibn ‘Umar’s positive role over the decades-long *fitan*. Similarly, the expression *scholar of fitan* also demands for a comprehensive study that this research aims to pursue.

The second considerable work is al-Baghawī’s *Mu‘jam al-Ṣaḥabah* (Dictionary of the Companions of the Prophet)⁶⁰ which is a rich source for later biographical works and *ḥadīth*

⁵² Muḥammad Ibn Sa‘d, *Kitāb al-Ṭabaqāt al-Kubrā* [The Book of the Major Classes] (Beirut: Dār Ṣadir, 1968) in 8 volumes.

⁵³ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’* [The Lives of Noble Figures] (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2006), X, 665.

⁵⁴ As‘ad Sālim Qayyim, *‘Ilm Ṭabaqāt al-Muḥaddithīn - Ahmiyyatuh wa Fawā’iduh* [Science of the Classes of Traditionists: its Importance and Advantages] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1994), 155.

⁵⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 142-188.

⁵⁶ Ibid, IV, 112-13.

⁵⁷ Ibid, IV, 141.

⁵⁸ Ibid, IV, 107-111.

⁵⁹ Ibid, II, 373.

⁶⁰ ‘Abd al-Allah b. Muḥammad al-Baghawī, *Mu‘jam al-Ṣaḥabah* [Dictionary of the Companions of the Prophet] (Kuwait: Maktabat Dār al-Bayān, 2000) in 5 volumes.

commentaries.⁶¹ Unlike Ibn Sa‘d, al-Baghawī arranges biographies in the alphabetical order. Al-Baghawī does not seem to make any significant addition to what had already been provided by Ibn Sa‘d. However, there are a few worth mentioning additions.⁶² In a tradition, the Prophet is reported to have looked at Ibn ‘Umar and said, “All praise be to God who guided (even) through misguidance and kept misguidance obscure to whom He wants”.⁶³ Such confessional anecdotes irrespective of their authenticity shed light on the subject in both cases. In case they are authentic, then they directly describe the position of Ibn ‘Umar, otherwise, they indirectly refer to the popularity of his position in the later stage.

The third notable biographical work is Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī’s *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* (Acquaintance with the Companions).⁶⁴ Most of the traditionists have considered him trustworthy.⁶⁵ Regarding Ibn ‘Umar, this book, too, does not enrich the subject with anything remarkable and summarizes the already available content about him.⁶⁶

The fourth book worth mentioning on biographical literature is *al-’Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifat al-’Aṣḥāb* (The Comprehensive Dictionary on the introduction of the Companions) written by Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr.⁶⁷ The author is a volatile intellectual and has been described as the best *ḥadīth* scholar of his time in Andalusia.⁶⁸ The work is also ranked highly and rated as “sublime, preferable and useful”.⁶⁹ Despite the famous traditionist Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ (d. 643/1245)’s approval of its lucidity and academic insight, the work is criticized by him for focusing more on the differences

⁶¹ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-Iṣḥābah fī Tamayiz al-Ṣaḥābah* [The Goal in the Distinction of the Companions], ed. Muhammad al-’Amīn (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992), 35.

⁶² al-Baghawī, *Mu‘jam al-Ṣaḥābah*, III, 468-481.

⁶³ Ibid, III, 474.

⁶⁴ Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allah Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* [Acquaintance with the Companions] (Riyadh: Dār al-Watan li al-Nashr, 1998) in 7 volumes.

⁶⁵ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Mizān al-’Iṭidāl fī Naqd al-Rijāl* [Narrators of Ḥadīth] (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1963), I, 111.

⁶⁶ Ibid, III, 1709-11.

⁶⁷ Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr al-Qurṭubī, *al-’Istī‘āb fī Ma‘rifat al-’Aṣḥāb* [The Comprehensive Dictionary on the introduction of the Companions] (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1992) in 4 volumes.

⁶⁸ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-’A’yān wa ’Anbā’ ’Abnā’ al-Zamān* [The Obituaries of Eminent Men] (Beirut: Dār Ṣādir, 1900-94), VII, 66.

⁶⁹ Ibid, VII, 67; Aḥmad Ibn Yaḥyā al-Dabbī, *Bughyat al-Multamis fī Tārīkh Rijāl Ahl al-Andalus* [Biographic Encyclopedia of Arab Spain] (Cairo: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabī, 1967), I, 490.

amongst the companions and giving preference to historical material over *ḥadīth* one.⁷⁰ Therefore, three out of four pages on Ibn ‘Umar can be found devoted to *fitan* and the last page contains four narrations showing his regret not to participate with the fourth caliph ‘Alī against the rebellious tyrant group. Some of these anecdotes are very confessional but contain very useful details.

The fifth work is Ibn al-Athīr’s *‘Usud al-Ghābah fī Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* (The Lions of the Forest and the Knowledge of the Companions).⁷¹ The author is an expert (*ḥāfiẓ*) of *ḥadīth* and history together along with genealogy.⁷² He has tried to assimilate most of the literature written about the companions especially of Ibn Mandah (d. 305/1005), Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī, Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr and Abū Mūsā al-Madīnī (d. 581/1185). Regarding the subject under discussion, Ibn al-Athīr makes a helpful contribution.⁷³ He narrates the causes of Ibn ‘Umar’s aversion of civil wars and the conflicts surrounding the caliphate as a result of his care, caution, good will or even confusion in some cases. Likewise, the book contains anecdotes about his spiritual life in presence of the Prophet that led to a change in his personality.⁷⁴

The next noticeable work *Siyar ‘A‘lām al-Nubalā’* (The Lives of Noble Figures) is by al-Dhahabī, a famous scholar of the 8th/14th century with key works in *ḥadīth*, history and genealogy.⁷⁵ The author furnishes a worthy profile of Ibn ‘Umar, mentions him as a prolific narrator, names his teachers and students, and elaborates on his moral character, his love and attachment with the Prophet and other such areas.⁷⁶ Al-Dhahabī supplements information about Ibn ‘Umar and narrates some anecdotes which were not reported earlier. These anecdotes record various conversations amongst the companions and thus further elucidate upon Ibn ‘Umar’s position during the civil wars. Therefore, despite late composition, we shall greatly benefit from

⁷⁰ ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *Ma‘rifat Anwā‘ ‘Ilm al-Ḥadīth* [An Introduction to the Science of *Ḥadīth*] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1986), 292.

⁷¹ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *‘Usud al-Ghābah fī Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah* [The Lions of the Forest and the Knowledge of the Companions] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘lmiyyah, 1994) volumes: 8.

⁷² Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-‘A‘yān*, III, 348; Franz Rosenthal, *A History of Muslim Historiography* (Leiden: Brill, 1968), 491.

⁷³ Ibid, III, 336-340.

⁷⁴ Ibid, III, 336.

⁷⁵ Khayr al-Dīn al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām* [The Great Figures] (Beirut: Dār al-‘Ilm li al-Malāim, 2002), V, 325-26.

⁷⁶ Ibid, IV, 307.

it.⁷⁷ In an interesting anecdote, Ibn ‘Umar is found summing up the whole *fitan* using a simile⁷⁸ that shows how deeply he was involved in *fitan*.

The next biographical dictionary *al-‘Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥabah* (The goal in the distinction of the Companions)⁷⁹ is by Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, a prolific author and an expert in different fields.⁸⁰ The book is probably the most comprehensive dictionary on biographies of the Prophet’s companions and contains almost double the number of biographies found in Ibn al-Athīr’s *‘Usud al-Ghābah*.⁸¹ A distinguishing feature of this work is to provide knowledge about Ibn ‘Umar’s network, his interactions, stature, legacy etc. However, the dictionary does not touch upon *fitan* (civil wars) at all.⁸²

Biographical literature depicts Ibn ‘Umar as a very religious figure but seems to take different positions when it comes to his stance on civil wars. Some dictionaries maintain complete silence, like Ibn Ḥajar’s *al-‘Iṣābah*, other works tacitly approve of his position without making a mention of the companions against whom his stance goes, like Ibn Sa‘d’s *al-Ṭabaqāt*, while others mention those companions who were in the wrong, like al-Dhahabī’s *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*.

1.5.3 *Sīrah*

As a historical-religious discipline, *sīrah* signifies “the biography of the Prophet and his conduct in the expeditions”⁸³ or “the biography and expeditions ... as well as the rest of his history that illuminates his (model) ways”.⁸⁴ *Sīrah* is also an important source for the study of the lives of the companions, for all *sīrah* events are either related to their lives or happened around them. They were the only people who witnessed the Prophet’s sayings, actions, and judgements and conveyed them to us. Ibn ‘Umar too is closely connected to these events. For example, he had close family ties with Zayd b. ‘Amr b. Nufayl (d. 606), a *ḥanaḥī* (monotheist) seeker of the true

⁷⁷ Ibid, IV, 317.

⁷⁸ Ibid, IV, 321.

⁷⁹ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *al-‘Iṣābah fī Tamyīz al-Ṣaḥabah* [The Goal in the Distinction of the Companions] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Imiyyah, 1994) in 8 volumes.

⁸⁰ al-Ziriklī, *al-A‘lām*, I, 178-79.

⁸¹ “al-Mu‘allafāt fī Kutub al-Tarājim [Books on Biographical Literature]”, *Islamweb.net*, 01/07/2022, <<https://articles.islamweb.net/media/index.php?page=article&lang=A&id=16967>>

⁸² Ibid, IV, 159-60.

⁸³ Muhammad b. ‘Alī al-Tahānawī, *Mawsū‘at Kashshāf Iṣṭilāḥāt al-Funūn wa al-‘Ulūm* [The Revealer or Dictionary of the Technical Terms] (Beirut: Maktabat Lubnān, 1996), I, 998.

⁸⁴ Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 393.

religion of Abraham mentioned in almost all *sīrah* books in the context of pre-Islamic Arabia.⁸⁵ Zayd's son Sa'īd (d. 51/671) was the main force behind the conversion of Ibn 'Umar's family to Islam. More so, the active role Ibn 'Umar's father and sister (Ḥafṣa) kept him abreast of the events in the Prophet's public and private life.

Thus, finding out useful information through or about Ibn 'Umar in *sīrah* literature is natural. Some incidents of his life are referred especially in *sīrah* books like his acceptance of Islam and migration to Medina with his father⁸⁶; denial of permission to take part in Badr and Uḥud due to his young age⁸⁷; his participation in *ghazawāt* and *sarāya* (major and minor wars)⁸⁸ and so on. Some important works on *sīrah* are discussed as following:

Al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah (Biography of the Prophet) of Ibn Hishām (d. 213/833) is a major source of this genre and a recension of Ibn Ishāq's (151/768) biography of the Prophet.⁸⁹ The book depicts Ibn 'Umar as a key source of important *sīrah* events,⁹⁰ as an active companion during and after the life of the Prophet⁹¹ and as someone who remained very close to him.⁹²

Another famous work is Ibn Qayyim's (d. 751/1350) *Zād al-Ma'ād fī Hadyi Khayr al-'Ibād* (Provisions for the Hereafter under the Guidance of the Best Man).⁹³ Contrary to *sīrah* writers, Ibn Qayyim has combined the methodologies of the traditionists (*muḥaddithīn*) and that of the jurists (*fuqahā'*) for relying heavily on the Prophet's traditions and giving topical order to the events. Ibn 'Umar has been ascribed as a prolific narrator, however, the work does not touch

⁸⁵ al-Zirikī, *al-A'lām*, III, 60.

⁸⁶ 'Abd al-Malik Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah* [Biography of the Prophet] (Egypt: Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī, 1955), I, 348.

⁸⁷ Muḥammad b. 'Umar al-Waqidī, *al-Maghāzī* [Military Expeditions of the Prophet Muḥammad] (Beirut: Dār al-'Ilamī, 1989), I, 21.

⁸⁸ 'Abd al-Malik al-Kharkūshī, *Sharaf al-Muṣṭafā* [The Honour of Prophet Muhammad] (Mecca: Dār al-Bashā'ir, 2003), VI, 80; Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah wa Ma'rifat Aḥwāl Ṣāḥib al-Sharī'ah* [Proofs of Prophethood and Knowledge of the Circumstances of the Sharī'ah-Holder] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1985), VII, 10-13.

⁸⁹ See preface of the editors on: Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*.

⁹⁰ Ibid, I, 348-350. For further detail, refer to sub-section 2.6 on Ibn 'Umar's scholarship.

⁹¹ Ibid, I, 474-476, 566, II, 66, 72-73, 204-205, 356-357, 413, 488-490, 601-602, 642. See also chapter one for early life of Ibn 'Umar.

⁹² Another incident showing Ibn 'Umar's adherence to the Prophet is his being 10th of the tens-group attending a sermon of the Prophet (2/631), see: Ibid, II, 631.

⁹³ Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyyah, *Zād al-Ma'ād fī Hadyi Khayr al-'Ibād* [Provisions for the Hereafter under the guidance of the best Man] (Jeddah: Majma' al-Fiqh al-Islamī, 2018).

much upon civil wars (*fitan*) except when the word *fitnah* occurs in different Qur'ānic verses or prophetic traditions that are cited abundantly in the book. The author also explains different meanings of the notion *fitnah* in different contexts and briefly links them to numerous incidents of *fitan*.⁹⁴ Besides, the book alludes to some *fitan* events and Ibn 'Umar's activities during those times.⁹⁵

Even though *sīrah* literature is not directly related to *fitan*, it does sometimes talk about issues surrounding it. For example, al-Bayhaqī (d. 430/1066) in his book has discussed proofs of the prophethood of Muhammad. In a chapter on dreams, the author has also dealt with one seen by Ibn 'Umar about *fitan* and duly interpreted by the Prophet.⁹⁶ In short, *ṣīrah* literature is not very helpful and closely associated with our subject. Yet, on the basis of content and discourse analysis, isolated details can be derived from it after careful reading and digging in details. Finally, these isolated details can be brought together and be used to fill research gaps especially when relating Ibn 'Umar's early life to his role in *fitan*. Thus, I had to work on these scattered materials like an archaeologist.

1.5.4 Historical Literature (*tārīkh*)

Historical literature dating from 2nd/8th century may be considered as a key source of the literature available on *fitan*. However, its development, as an independent genre, made slow progress because the Muslims paid more attention to the disciplines of *ḥadīth* and *sīrah*. It is interesting to note that during the early years of Islam, both historiography and *ḥadīth* were taken to be identical for sharing common content, pattern, and authorities.⁹⁷

If the study of *fitan* wars was restricted only to *ḥadīth* studies, this research would have been easy. Historical literature makes the subject a daunting task and there seems to be a continuous tussle between two groups on *fitan*: One exaggerates political offences of its opponents, while the other justifies them, either by placing responsibility on someone's shoulders (like on Ibn Saba's) or considering it an error of judgement to lessen the intensity of the crimes. The former is known as Shiites and the latter has been described as Sunni-Shiites (*al-tashayyu' al-sunni*)⁹⁸.

⁹⁴ Ibn Qayyim, *Zād al-Ma'ād*, III, 13, 138, 151-152.

⁹⁵ Ibid, VII, 7-14.

⁹⁶ al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwah wa Ma'rifat Aḥwāl Ṣāhib al-Sharī'ah* [Proofs of Prophethood and Knowledge of the Circumstances of the Sharī'ah-Holder] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Imiyyah, 1985).

⁹⁷ Sauvaget, Introduction to the History, 25-27.

⁹⁸ Muḥammad b. Mukhtār al-Shanqīṭī, *al-Khilāfāt al-Siyāsiyah bayn al-Ṣaḥābah* [The Political Differences among the Companions of the Prophet] (Beirut: Arab Network for Research and Publishing, 2013), 206.

The reason behind this contention in history books is that when the early Islamic civil wars intensified the wave of fabrication in *ḥadīth*, traditionists developed studies of *ḥadīth* criticism and implemented it in *ḥadīth* literature. However, the same could not be employed strictly for reporting historical data by the historians.⁹⁹ As a result, two different pictures of *fitan* can be observed in two different literatures: *ḥadīth* and history. Thus, one needs to be very careful when analyzing historical works and constantly cross-check and verify with other sources. It is important to draw attention to the differences between the historical facts and fabrications or confessional approaches. My methodological approaches have enabled me to make this distinction. Some important works on Islamic history are hereby discussed in the chronological order with reference to early Islamic civil wars.

The first important work is Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawārī (d. 282/895)'s *al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (The Book of Long Accounts) published in one volume and with different editions.¹⁰⁰ The author is believed to be a reliable narrator,¹⁰¹ however, he has been accused of pro-Persian nationalism¹⁰² and concealment of sources by omitting the chains of transmitters.¹⁰³ That may be because as Robinson suggests "(his work) eschews *isnād*-equipped *akḥbār* in favour of the synthetic voice of the single historian".¹⁰⁴ His book is actually the history of Persia "from the Persian, rather than the Arabic, viewpoint".¹⁰⁵ The book is a universal history, therefore it briefly starts with the history of humankind on earth and reaches the Prophet Isma'īl.¹⁰⁶

Fitān has received a great deal of the author's attention. In the course of *fitān* events (battles of the Camel, Ṣiffīn, arbitration, etc.), Ibn 'Umar's positive role has been acknowledged and his activities have been discussed in detail.¹⁰⁷ The Persian outlook of the book helps our research

⁹⁹ Harmās, *Maṣādir al-Sīrah*, 284-85.

¹⁰⁰ Abū Ḥanīfah al-Dīnawārī, *al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl* (Leiden: Brill, 1888; Cairo: Dār 'Ihyā' al-Kutub al-'Arabī, 1960)

¹⁰¹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A'lām al-Nubalā'*, XIII, 422; Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *'Irshād al-'Arīb 'ilā Ma'rifat al-Adīb* [Dictionary of Learned Men] (Beirut: Dār al-Maghrib al-Islāmī, 1993), I, 258.

¹⁰² Rosenthal, *Muslim Historiography*, 92; Muḥammad b. Ṣāmil al-Sulamī, *Manhaj kitābat al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Method of Writing in Islamic History] (Riyadh: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 2008), 464.

¹⁰³ al-Sulamī, *Manhaj kitābat al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī*, 467.

¹⁰⁴ Chase F. Robinson, *Islamic Historiography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 36.

¹⁰⁵ Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia. "al-Dīnawārī." Encyclopedia Britannica, January 16, 2015. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Dinawari>.

¹⁰⁶ al-Dīnawārī, *al-Akḥbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 1-10.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, 143, 198-201, 226-227, 315.

look from a different angle. Similarly, the author's positive approach to Ibn 'Umar despite a different perspective makes his work very useful for this study.

The second work is al-Ṭabarī (d. 310/923)'s voluminous chronicle *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* (History of the Prophets and Kings). Al-Ṭabarī is one of the most respected scholars of his time for occupying a vast area of Muslim scholarship.¹⁰⁸ The book is deemed comprehensive and reliable by both the classical and modern scholars¹⁰⁹ and edited and translated into different languages many times.¹¹⁰

The author discusses *fitan* period in three volumes¹¹¹ and endorses Ibn 'Umar's positive role. He hints at Ibn 'Umar's early development of political thought when his father 'Umar was on his deathbed.¹¹² From here evolved Ibn 'Umar's opinion of not selecting the future caliph while a caliph is still alive. The author has acknowledged Ibn 'Umar's peacebuilding role during the battle of the Camel¹¹³ and in post-*Ṣiffīn* arbitration. These events witness important views of Ibn 'Umar, e.g., the illegality of using unfair means to gain power; following a practical approach by not becoming a hindrance when conditions are getting favourable for some agreement and so on.¹¹⁴ Similarly there are other anecdotes which imply Ibn 'Umar's pro-Alī standing.¹¹⁵ Al-Ṭabarī also mentions Ibn 'Umar's efforts for political stability after the accession of Yazīd.¹¹⁶ In addition, Ibn 'Umar has been found to work for civil rights by

¹⁰⁸ Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Ṭabqāt al-Shāfi'yīn* [Classes of Shāfi'ī Jurists] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, 1993), 222-223; Waines, D.. "al-Ṭabarī." *Encyclopedia Britannica*, January 1, 2022. <https://www.britannica.com/biography/al-Tabari>.

¹⁰⁹ Muhammad Amaḥḥoon, *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fī al-Fitnah min Riwayāt al-'Imām al-Ṭabarī wa al-Muḥaddithīn* [Research on the Stances of the Companions during fitnah through the traditions of al-Ṭabarī and of the Traditionists] (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007), 166-169; Abū al-Fidā' Ismā'īl b. 'Umar Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* [The Beginning and the End] (Beirut: Dār 'Iḥyā' al-Turāth al-'Arabī, 1988), XI, 166; As is described by Franz Rosenthal "His accounts are as authentic as one can expect from any pre-modern age". See: *History of al-Ṭabarī*, translated into English by Franz Rosenthal, (translator's Foreword) xiii (books.google.com).

¹¹⁰ Muḥammad b. Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh al-Rusul wa al-Mulūk* [History of the Prophets and Kings] (Leiden: Brill, 1879–1901 <https://referenceworks.brillonline.com/browse/tarikh-al-rusul-wa-l-muluk> ; (Cairo: Dār al-Ma'ārif 1960-1969); (Beirut: Dār al-Turāth, 1967); ISBN 978-0-7914-7249-1.

¹¹¹ Ibid, IV, 340-576, vol. V and VI, 1-194.

¹¹² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 227-229.

¹¹³ Ibid, IV, 446-60.

¹¹⁴ Ibid, V, 69.

¹¹⁵ Ibid, V, 58-59.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, V, 343.

criticizing those in government for their excessive use of power.¹¹⁷ Thus, al-Ṭabarī's history is a significant document about the peace promoting role of Ibn 'Umar. It is not only a more reliable historical work but also narrates unique anecdotes about the subject matter which makes it crucial for our research.

The next book *al-Futūḥ* (the Conquests) is penned by Ahmad b. al-A'tham (d. 314/926), a Shiite historian of the 3rd/10th century. His voluminous and multi-edition writing¹¹⁸ sheds light on Ibn 'Umar's peacebuilding activities throughout the *fitan*, including the martyrdom of 'Uthmān,¹¹⁹ battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn, arbitration,¹²⁰ Ibn 'Umar dialogues with Imām Ḥusayn.¹²¹ Although, traditionists doubt the author's reliability¹²², however, his work provides details that do not exist in other histories. This attribute not only makes it a significant source for our research but also calls for careful examination because of the mixing of the history and story.

Apart from the above, other books on history have also discussed Ibn 'Umar's peace promoting efforts during the period of *fitan*. These include *The History (tārīkh)* of Khalīfah b. Khayyāt (d. 240/854) that mentions Ibn 'Umar's meeting with Mu'āwiyah in a delegation to stop him from causing bloodshed by his nomination of Yazīd.¹²³ 'Umar b. Shabbah (d. 262/876)'s *Tārīkh al-Madīnah* also mentions anecdotes about Ibn 'Umar's activism during the last days of 'Uthmān. It uncovers Ibn 'Umar's perception of how a caliphate is different from a kingdom and how the rights of a caliph differ from that of a king.¹²⁴ Similarly, Ibn Kathīr's extensive historical work *al-Bidāyah wa al-Nihāyah* (The Beginning and the End) reports events which discuss the spiritual acumen of Ibn 'Umar; his meetings with Imām Ḥusayn in an attempt to stop him before his martyrdom¹²⁵ and his hope for the restoration of peace through a noble ruler even after all

¹¹⁷ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, VI, 112-13.

¹¹⁸ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad ibn al-A'tham, *al-Futūḥ* [the Conquests] (Beirut: Dār al-'Aḍwā', 1991) in 9 volumes.

¹¹⁹ Ibid, II, 409-453.

¹²⁰ Ibid, II, 409-15, 452-3.

¹²¹ Ibid, IV, 25.

¹²² Yāqūt al-Ḥamawī, *'Irshād al-'Arīb*, I, 202.

¹²³ Khalīfah Ibn Khayyāt, *Tārīkh Khalīfah b. Khayyāt* [History of Khalīfah b. Khayyāt] (Beirut: Dār al-Qalam, 1977), 213-17.

¹²⁴ 'Umar ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah* [History of Medina] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1996), IV, 1175.

¹²⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI, 259.

these events of civil wars.¹²⁶ Likewise, *Tārīkh Dimashq* (the History of Damascus) mentions Ibn ‘Umar as one who used to write to others to convince them to follow his approach.¹²⁷

1.5.5 Contemporary works

Some of the significant contemporary works relevant to my research study are listed as under:

The first one is *al-Khilāfāt al-Siyāsiyyah bayn al-Ṣaḥābah* (The Political Differences among the Companions of the Prophet) written by Muḥammad b. Mukhtār al-Shanqīṭī.¹²⁸ The main concern of the book lies in its detailed discussion on the political differences among the companions of the Prophet. Rather than going into detail of these differences, the author has given some methodological principles that could be helpful for the future of the Muslim *ummah*. The written then discusses these differences in the light of the methodological principles proposed by Ibn al-‘Arabī (d. 543/1148) and Ibn Taymiyyah (d. 728/1328).

Another important work is the book *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fī al-Fitnah min Riwayāt al-Imām al-Ṭabarī wa al-Muḥaddithīn* (Research on the Stances of the Companions during *Fitnah* through the Traditions of al-Ṭabarī and of the Traditionists) by Muḥammad Amaḥzoon.¹²⁹ This book is divided into three sections: the first one is an introduction of *Tārīkh al-Ṭabarī*.¹³⁰ In the second one, issues like *fitnah*, the movement of Ibn Saba’, elements of *fitan* in the reign of ‘Uthmān, and perspective of the companions (*ṣaḥābah*) and the successors (*tābi ‘ūn*) of *fitan* have been taken up.¹³¹ The focus of the third section is the Caliphate of ‘Alī: impact of Ibn Saba’s movement, and the division of Muslims into three factions: the Syrians demanding the vengeance upon ‘Uthmān’s death, those who wanted to postpone the vengeance until political stability and those who showed a neutral stance.¹³² Towards the end of this section, the author studies factors involved in provoking the battles, the arbitration and the conclusions rendered from the *fitan*.¹³³ Ibn ‘Umar is mentioned in this book briefly amongst those who did not partake

¹²⁶ Ibid, VI, 268.

¹²⁷ ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq* [History of Damascus] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1995), xxxi, 169.

¹²⁸ Muḥammad b. Mukhtār al-Shanqīṭī, *al-Khilāfāt al-Siyāsiyyah bayn al-Ṣaḥābah* (Beirut: Arab Network for Research and Publishing, 2013).

¹²⁹ Muhammad Amaḥzoon, *Tahqīq Mawāqif al-Ṣaḥābah fī al-Fitnah min Riwayāt al-Imām al-Ṭabarī wa al-Muḥaddithīn* (Cairo: Dār al-Salām, 2007).

¹³⁰ Ibid, 1-198.

¹³¹ Ibid, 199-394.

¹³² Ibid, 394-492.

¹³³ Ibid, 493-608.

in any political activities and kept their calm.¹³⁴

This work significantly offers detail about the socio-political conditions of the turbulent times of *fitan* but does not mention Ibn ‘Umar’s contribution. In other words, there is plenty of information about the overall environment of those times, but it has no direct bearing on Ibn ‘Umar. At this juncture, it may not be out of place to say that the current research study plays significant role to close this gap.

The third important work is the PhD dissertation of Fu'ad Jabali, titled *A Study of the Companions of the Prophet: Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments*.¹³⁵ The aim of this study is to examine causes of the battle of Şiffīn whether they were religious or tribal. The writer concludes that it was fought for religious reasons between two groups: the group which had close connection with the Prophet throughout his *da‘wah* career and the group of newly converted Muslims who had become part of Islamic community at a later stage.¹³⁶ The dissertation mentions Ibn ‘Umar on a couple of places to show his neutrality¹³⁷ and counts him amongst those who passed the period of civil wars unblemished without falling into it.¹³⁸ The argument of the author about Ibn ‘Umar is very plain and does not seem to contribute to discussion of the subject matter of this study.

Another work is also a PhD dissertation of Aaron M. Hagler, titled *The Echoes of Fitna: Developing Historiographical Interpretations of the Battle of Şiffīn*.¹³⁹ The purpose of this study is to trace the presentation of the story of this battle in different Islamic sources with distinct: *Waq‘at Şiffīn* by Naşr b. Muzāḥim (d. 212/827), and the histories of Ibn ‘Asākar (d. 571/1176), Ibn ‘Adīm (d. 660/1262) and Ibn Kathīr (d. 774/1373).

Among the recent writings, there are some that discuss the life of Ibn ‘Umar, just as Muḥyiddin Mistu’s work *‘Abd Allāh b. Umar al-Şaḥābī al-Mu’tasī bi Rasūl Allāh - 11 BH – 73 AH* (‘Abd

¹³⁴ Ibid, 485-486.

¹³⁵ Fu’ād Jabalī, “A Study of the Companions of the Prophet: Geographical Distribution and Political Alignments” (PhD thesis, Montreal: McGill University, 1999).

¹³⁶ Ibid, 250.

¹³⁷ Ibid, 10-11.

¹³⁸ Ibid, 216.

¹³⁹ Aaron M. Hagler, “*The Echoes of Fitna: Developing Historiographical Interpretations of the Battle of Şiffīn*” (PhD thesis, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2011).

Allāh b. Umar – the staunch companion and follower of the Prophet’s Footsteps).¹⁴⁰ It is part of a series of books written on important Islamic personalities. This book studies Ibn ‘Umar’s life very briefly without any focus upon any specific aspect from childhood till death.

Another similar biographical work is *Akhbār ‘Umar wa ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar* (Accounts of ‘Umar and his son ‘Abd Allāh) written by ‘Alī al-Ṭanṭāwī and Nājī al-Ṭanṭāwī.¹⁴¹ The chief portion of the book¹⁴² has been devoted to the life of ‘Umar – father of ‘Abd Allāh. However, a few pages¹⁴³ do discuss Ibn ‘Umar and his stance of not joining any group in good faith and shirking from aggravation of *fitan* in any way possible. However, the author does not approach the issue from the perspective of this study.

Article of an Italian scholar Laura Veccia Vaglieri (d. 1989) on Ibn ‘Umar in Encyclopaedia of Islam¹⁴⁴ is another significant work on the subject. While praising high moral qualities of Ibn ‘Umar, she makes an interesting remark: ‘Some of these stories may have been invented, but his nobility of soul is incontestable’. This shows that Ibn ‘Umar in history is not much different from Ibn ‘Umar of the sources. On three occasions, the writer comments upon Ibn ‘Umar’s refusal to accept caliphate in these words: ‘It is undeniable that Ibn ‘Umar was lacking in energy’. Such remarks are not new and are reported to have been passed by Mu‘āwiya when he wanted the accession of his son, Yazīd. Therefore, the comments need proper historical context with due analysis. ‘Offers to become a caliph also require critical examination as in most cases they were offers from one of the two warring groups.

Another work is Muhammad Rawās Qalajī’s *Mawsū‘at Fiqh ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar: ‘Aṣruḥ wa Ḥayātuh* [Encyclopedia of the Jurisprudential Views of Ibn ‘Umar: His Times and Life].¹⁴⁵ This work is also part of a series of books that aims to present jurisprudential views of different companions. This book is on Ibn ‘Umar’s jurisprudential views in alphabetical order. The first

¹⁴⁰ Muḥyiddin Mistu, *‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Ṣaḥābī al-Mu’tasī bi Rasūl Allāh* (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 1992).

¹⁴¹ ‘Alī al-Ṭanṭāwī and Nājī al-Ṭanṭāwī, *Akhbār ‘Umar wa ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar* (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islami, 1983).

¹⁴² *Ibid*, 1-430.

¹⁴³ *Ibid*, 431-464.

¹⁴⁴ Veccia Vaglieri, L., “‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar b. al-Kḥaṭṭāb”, in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs. Consulted online on 23 March 2022 <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_SIM_0067> First published online: 2012.

¹⁴⁵ Rawās Qalajī, *Mawsū‘ah Fiqh ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar: ‘Aṣruḥ wa Ḥayātuh* [Encyclopedia of the Jurisprudential Views of Ibn ‘Umar: His Times and Life] (Beirut: Dār al-Nafā’is, 1986).

forty pages focus on his life; however, his political stance is dealt in a single page with a mention of his piety, cautiousness, and hesitation.¹⁴⁶

Probably the most relevant study to my thesis is the Master's thesis submitted by Fāṭima Muhammad Nejib al-Imām (d. 1994), titled *'AbdAllāh Ibn 'Umar Ibn Al-Khaṭṭāb*.¹⁴⁷ Its third chapter: 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and the Caliphate bears close relevance to this study. The author says that due to Ibn 'Umar's prestigious status amongst the companions, he was offered the caliphate on three occasions, but he declined these offers. This was because during the era of 'Uthmān, the government assumed a worldly shade and color. The Caliph himself favoured his own tribesmen excessively and became responsible for the revival of the old tribal spirit. As a result, insurrections broke out and mutinous spirit surged in society that led to the assassination of the Caliph. The writer elaborates that Ibn 'Umar was deemed as a rightful candidate for the caliphate. She also acquits him of the objections of lacking in energy and being unfit for the office.¹⁴⁸

However, just as the author herself states in the preface 'There is still the need for a comprehensive study of his teaching and doctrine. The present work does not attempt to cover this need'.¹⁴⁹ This study does not focus on Ibn 'Umar's thoughts and struggle regarding the end-of-war, his peacebuilding measures, and resolution of the political conflict, etc.

Other than the literature mentioned above, books concentrate on Ibn 'Umar's active role in resolving conflict of the caliphate during *fitan* period are almost non-existent. Since none of these contemporary books and articles does justice to this topic, this research not only fills the gap but also provides original contribution to this neglected area.

1.6 Introduction to *Fitan*

This section examines *fitan* in two areas: its literal meaning and the rivalry behind the *fitan* civil wars. The rivalry has two aspects: the one that existed amongst various branches of the Quraysh (Ibn 'Umar belonged to one of its offshoots too) and the second that prevailed between Syria and Iraq. Both first became two provinces of the fast-expanding Muslim caliphate and later

¹⁴⁶ Ibid, 23.

¹⁴⁷ Fāṭima Muhammad Nejib al-Imām, "'Abd Allāh Ibn 'Umar Ibn al-Khaṭṭāb'" (master's thesis, Durham University, 1979).

¹⁴⁸ Ibid 74-85.

¹⁴⁹ Ibid, ii.

turned capital seats of government in the Umayyad and Abbasid caliphates respectively. The greater purpose of this section is to understand the circumstances wherein Ibn ‘Umar was born.

1.6.1 Meaning of *Fitan*

Fitan (فِتْن) has been an old subject-area of Islamic scholarship. The word *fitan* is the plural form of the word *fitnah* (فِتْنَة) with the trilateral *f-t-n* (فَتَن) root that means to purify gold through burning. It is also used to punish a human by throwing him into the fire.¹⁵⁰ Primarily it is used to denote falling into a trial, test, or hard times. Later it has also been used for the hateful things caused by the trials or tests.¹⁵¹

Fitnah also means a seduction that deviates one from his purpose or the righteous path. Therefore, it is used for (one’s love for) wealth, children or for the persecution to stop Muslims from believing in the unity of God. Just as *fitnah* means to burn, it also means the things that may lead to the burning in the fire of the hell, like disbelief (*kufur*), dissension or civil unrest, treachery, etc.¹⁵²

Thus, it may be deduced that the denotational meaning of *fitnah* is to burn with an initial connotation of burning of the emotions. Later an expansion occurs in both denotational and connotative meanings and the literal meaning *burning by fire* (used in the past as a torturing device) may give the meaning of *persecution* (to avert someone from religion); *punishment* (in secular sense); *polytheism* (due to the connection of Muslim’s persecution by polytheists and pagans in early Islamic history); *test* or *trial* (for the person being persecuted or punished with the relation of fire used as a torturing device). The initial connotative meaning *burning of the emotions* is also used in multiple ways: signifying one’s *love* for women, children, wealth, etc., through temptation, seduction or persuasion or threat. However, in most cases, the term is used in a negative sense to derail one from the right path/aim.

It is very interesting to see that this term does not seem to be an important word in pre-Islamic poetry as it is scarcely used by the pre-Islamic Arab poets. It is not found in the renowned seven

¹⁵⁰ al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Mufradāt*, 623.

¹⁵¹ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-‘Asqalānī, *Fath al-Bārī* [Commentary on *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*] (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1959), I, 65.

¹⁵² Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, XIII, 319.

or nine suspended odes (al-Mu‘allaqāt)¹⁵³, also does not exist in the *diwāns* of ‘Imru’ al-Qays (d. 510), Ṭarafah (d. 569), Zuhayr (d. 609), Labīd (d. 40/661), ‘Antarah (d. 608), Ḥāris b. Ḥilzah (d. 580). Yet, it has occurred once in the *diwān* of al-A‘shā (d. 7/629) signifying trap,¹⁵⁴ in *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* (an anthology of ancient Arabic poems collected by al-Mufaḍḍal, d. 168/780)¹⁵⁵ - to mean *seduction*¹⁵⁶, similarly in *Ḥamāsah* of ‘Abī Tammām (d. 231/845) in the meaning of *captivate* or *trap*.¹⁵⁷

Unlike the pre-Islamic era, the word *fitnah* is given considerable attention and has been widely used in Islamic literature. The main sources of Islam i.e., the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* have deeply influenced Arabic literary tradition.¹⁵⁸ Also it has given new meanings to numerous Arabic words and enlarged the semantic scope of many terms unknown before the advent of Islam.¹⁵⁹ The same holds true for *fitnah*.

This study, however, does not deal with *fitnah* in the broadest socio-linguistic sense, it is limited to the most important area of *fitan* that is civil unrest or early Muslim civil wars¹⁶⁰ that took place between 34/655 and 73/692 due to political instability, infirmity and political differences. If other types of *fitan* put the individual or a family interest at stake, *fitnah* (in the meaning of civil war) can potentially endanger the security of a society, country or of the whole world sometimes. Now, the next two sections will provide a background for these wars, but the objective shall be to highlight Ibn ‘Umar’s role and efforts to prevent people from intestinal

¹⁵³ Abū ‘Amr al-Shaybānī, *Sharḥ al-Mu‘allaqāt al-Tis’* [Commentary on the Nine Hanging Odes of Arabia] (Beirut: Mu‘assasat al-‘A‘lamī, 2001); Ḥusayn b. Aḥmad al-Zawzanī, *Sharḥ al-Mu‘allaqāt al-Sab‘* (Beirut: Dār ‘ihyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 2002)

¹⁵⁴ خَلَقْتُ هُنْدًا لِقَلْبِي فَتْنَةً * هَكَذَا تُعْرَضُ لِلنَّاسِ الْفِتْنُ (ديوان الأعشى)

¹⁵⁵ al-Mufaḍḍal al-Ḍabbī *al-Mufaḍḍaliyāt* [The Collection of al-Mufaḍḍal] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, n.d.), 61.

¹⁵⁶ إِذْ تَسْتَبِيكَ بِأَصْلَتِي نَاعِمٍ ... قَامْتُ لِتَقْتِنَهُ بِغَيْرِ قِنَاعٍ

¹⁵⁷ وَأَدْنِيَّتِي حَتَّى إِذَا مَا فَتَنْتَنِي * بِقَوْلٍ يَجُلُّ الْعُصْمَ سَهْلَ الْأَبَاطِحِ

Abū ‘Alī al-Marzūqī, *Sharḥ Dīwān al-Ḥammāsah* [Commentary on Abū Tammām’s Anthology of Arabic Poetry] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2003).

¹⁵⁸ Roger Allen, *An Introduction to Arabic Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 64.

¹⁵⁹ Shawqī Dayf, *Tārīkh al-‘Adab al-‘Arabī* [History of Arabic Literature] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1989), II, 32.

¹⁶⁰ ‘Abd ‘Allāh b. ‘Umar al-Damījī, *Minḥāj Ahl al-Sunnah fī al-Ta‘āmul ma‘a al-Fitan al-‘Āmmah* [Ahl al-Sunnah’s Method of Dealing with *Fitna*] (Mecca: Umm al-Qurā University, n.d.), 35.

wars and securing peace.

1.6.2 Tribal Rivalry of the Quraysh

According to Muslim accounts, the Ishmaelites have remained a leading religious influence in Mecca ever since the arrival of the Prophet Abraham (1813 BC - 1644 BC). However, amongst the secular arenas, first Banū Jurhum (Jurhamites / Gorrhamite) and later Banū Khuẓā'ah (Khazaites) held their sway. Quṣayy b. Kilāb (480-400 AD) is considered to be a pioneer who unified the descendants and scions of Fihir b. Mālik (260/230??) of the Ishmaelites. History chronicles refer to them as the tribe of the Quraysh. It was he who later settled this fraternity in and around Mecca after taking control over it. Later Quṣayy played a vital role in the religious, political, and economic reforms of the city-state (of Mecca)¹⁶¹.

Quṣayy was treated almost like a sovereign king. However, the way his heirs took charge of the key administrative positions gave rise to a system akin to aristocratic set-up. The leaders of various Qurayshite clans and their confederates evolved into a prestigious aristocracy. These lords formed a council of chiefs that regulated the religious, economic, political, and cultural spheres of the then Arab society. Though ideally all members enjoyed a uniform prestigious position in the council yet there were exceptions. Owing to personal charisma and exemplary past conduct, some individual members held exceptional powers and influence in the council so much that they could veto or accede a proposition in their personal capacity. All the free male members of different Qurayshite clans or its fraternity (*ḥulafā'*) could win the membership of the council provided he was above the age of forty years. However, there was relaxation in the age-limit in exceptional cases.¹⁶²

The council did not have any powers to prevail upon the others or enact their decisions, the authority that they enjoyed after the advent of Islam. At the most, they could contain the opponents through the economic sanctions or social boycott.¹⁶³ The chieftain of a tribe was elected depending on his name and fame. His charisma, valour, personality, aptitude, acumen, and past conduct won him popularity and acceptance amongst his people and generally this

¹⁶¹ Ṣafī al-Raḥmān Mubārakpūri, *al-Raḥiq al-Makhtūm* [The Sealed Nectar], (Beirut: Dār al-Hilāl, 2006), 20-25.

¹⁶² Muhammad Nazeer Kaka Khel, "Political System in Pre-Islamic Arabia," *Islamic Studies* 20, no.4 (1981): 375-393.

¹⁶³ *Ibid*, 385.

lordship lasted his lifetime. The chief's basic functions included "arbitration in disputes and leadership in war".¹⁶⁴

In the pre-Islamic era, Quṣayy's ascension to power and the establishment of the Meccan city-state at his hands resulted in the dominance of his children. 'Abd Manāf (430-505 AD) was his most talented son who played a key role in promoting the reforms of his father. Amongst the descendants of 'Abd Manāf, Hāshim (464-493) and 'Abd Shams (464-494?) held special place and to them are affiliated the Hashemites and the Umayyads. These two clans had supremacy in the Muslim world for centuries after the advent of Islam. The Hashemites seem to have been more accomplished than the Umayyads in both religious and secular realms¹⁶⁵ apart from the end of the 6th and beginning of the 7th centuries AD after the death of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib.¹⁶⁶ Afterwards, the Hashemites got engaged in bringing a new change (Islam)¹⁶⁷ and poised themselves at a far higher pedestal through a single person's ascension to prophethood. They

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 357-393.

¹⁶⁵ Abd Manāf strengthened remarkably what Quṣayy had accomplished in the political, military and administrative realms. Later Hāshim explored trading opportunities in the local and international market and thus paved way for economic prosperity. In the arena of religion and spirituality, Abd al-Muṭṭalib played a significant role through a re-discovery of Zamzam, a water resource and Ka'ba's lost treasures. He personally regulated the rites of ḥajj that helped the Quraysh in the commercial sphere (*siqāyah* and *rifādah*). Along with *siqāyah* and *rifādah*, he also achieved Dār al-Nadwah. Although, he was young and not the leader of all the Quraysh, however, his communication with Abrahah also raised his dignity among the Quraysh.

See: Husayn Mu'nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh* [History of the Quraysh] (Jeddah: al-Dār al-Su'ūdiyyah, 1988), 152; Jāhiz, ed. Charles Pellat, *The Life and Works of Jāhiz* [Berkeley: University of California, 1969], 58-61].

¹⁶⁶ With the demise of 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, the Hashemites started losing ground in the political arena. This led to the weakening of merchandise ethics in and around Mecca. Ordinary merchants were heavily exploited and tyrannized at the hands of the Umayyad business tycoons. Though the Hashemites lost on the political and economic front, still they prevailed over the Umayyads in matters of ethics and conduct. Full credit for the pact of *al-fuḍūl* (*ḥilf al-fuḍūl*) may be given to the Hashemites. On the contrary, 'Abd Shams (of the Umayyads) patronized the cruel kings of the market and opposed the Hashemites. Another key factor that further weakened the Hashemites financially was the custodianship of *nadwah* (assembly house), *rifādah* (responsibility of feeding the people), *siqāyah* (provision of water) and *ḥijābah* (trusteeship, maintenance and keeping keys of the Ka'ba). This sapped their finances heavily. The Umayyads kept expanding and strengthening their economy through unjust policies and tyrannical means. [Mu'nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh*, 164-171.]

¹⁶⁷ Especially, after the proclamation of Islam when first the pagans of the whole Arabian Peninsula got united under the leadership of the Umayyads. However, this supremacy of the Umayyads was in political and commercial spheres. [Fred M. Donner, *The Early Islamic Conquests* (Princeton: Princeton University, 1981), 51].

first gained religious supremacy and later through the conquest of Mecca, they won overall dominance (in the worldly arenas as well).

In the pre-Islamic tribal system, it was the political alliance, beside economic progress, that would determine the balance of power between the Hashemites and the Umayyads. For example, the Hashemites enacted *ḥilf al-fudūl*¹⁶⁸ whereas the Umayyads joined hands with the opponents.¹⁶⁹ Similarly, the advent of Islam caused alignment of a great majority of the pagan tribes with the Umayyads that strengthened their position in the Arabian Peninsula. Although the Muslim community had members from all major tribes, but the central authority resided in the Prophet who belonged to the tribe of Banū Hāshim. The conquest of Mecca made the Umayyads feel that the balance of power has tilted towards the Hashemites.

The city of Medina is situated about 275 miles away from Mecca. It is a historic city where Arab monotheists and Jews had settled prior to the migration of the Prophet. Before the advent of the Jews, Amalek used to live here who largely cultivated the land. When the Jews came here, they ruled over the Amalek and expanded further its agriculture with the natives' assistance. The Jews remained dominant here until a neighbor state of Yemen in the southern Arabia got hit by the destruction of Ma'rib dam and consequently a few branches of the Arab tribe Azd (of which the Awsites and the Khazrajites are better known) came to settle in Medina. Later, these two sub-tribes thrived to gain dominance over the Jews.¹⁷⁰

When the Prophet migrated to Medina, practically the Arabs were in command with large majority whereas the Jews, despite of their sizable population lived here as a minority. Banū Qurayza, Banū Naḍīr and Banu Qaynuqā' were three prominent Jewish tribes and contrary to the Arab tribes, they not only belonged to a historically established religion but were very strategic. When they could not prevail over the Arabs, they pragmatically developed friendly ties with the Arab tribes in a way that ensured their domination. Banū Qurayza and Banū Naḍīr had an alliance with the Awsites whereas Banū Qaynuqā' had a coalition with the Khazrajites. It was owing to the Jews' perspicacity that despite of common lineage, the Awsites and the Khazrajites had fought a series of battles for 120 years prior to Islam. The battle of Bu'āth is

¹⁶⁸ First who called people to this alliance for the establishment of justice was al-Zubayr b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib [Muhammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar* [History of Pre-Islamic Arabia] (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq al-Jadīdah, n.d), 167].

¹⁶⁹ Mu'nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh*, 167-169.

¹⁷⁰ 'Alī b. 'Abd Allah al-Samhūdī, *Wafā' al-Wafā' bi Akhbār Dār al-Muṣṭafā* [The City of Prophet Muḥammad - Medina] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, 1998), I, 22.

one of those deadly armed conflicts that had brought both the tribes at the brink of annihilation. Efforts were made for reformation and a search for an indisputable personality to rule over both the tribes. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Ubayy b. Salūl (d. 10/631) was likely to be crowned as a commonly acceptable ruler of Medina but the Pledges of ‘Aqaba-the-first and the-second took place wherein people from both the Awsites and the Khazrajites participated. Meanwhile, the Prophet immigrated to Medina and was unanimously recognized as a ruler.¹⁷¹ Besides some social activities, the Prophet had a predominantly religious persona in Mecca. The migration to Medina, however, brought the sovereign leadership in his hands as his rule was acceded by all the stakeholders i.e., the Muslims, the Jews, and polytheists alike.¹⁷²

The Medina’s political grouping was not totally on tribal basis. Here, the residents professing any creed or religion were allayed in unison as the *ummah*. However, two distinct groupings prevailed in the Muslims i.e., immigrants from Mecca (*muhājirūn*) and the local inhabitants (*ansār*).¹⁷³ Thus, a political system based on ideological federation evolved that mainly operated through semi-centralized confederacy.¹⁷⁴ In this system, the tribes were autonomous in religious and internal affairs, however, concerns related to defense and law and order were regulated by a central authority.¹⁷⁵

During this period, piety, moral conduct, competency, and ability along with the tribal affiliation were considered as eligibility criterion for governance and leadership in a candidate. The legacy of inherited ancestry and tribal prestige existed so much so that even the Prophet sometimes had to face opposition from some followers when any person with a inferior tribal background was nominated for any key post of administration. This happened when Zayd b. Ḥāritha and later his son ‘Usāma b. Zayd were given military commandership on merit basis.¹⁷⁶ It was because of the same reason that the Prophet did not re-construct Ka‘ba on Abraham’s demarcated boundaries.¹⁷⁷

¹⁷¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4566; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra*, I, 555-57, 584-85.

¹⁷² Muhammad Nazeer Kaka Khel, “Foundation of the Islamic State at Medina,” *Islamic Studies*, 21, no. 3 (1982), 71.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 81-82.

¹⁷⁴ Muhammad Hameedullah, *Rasūlullah: Hukumrānī wa Janneshīnī* [The Prophet’s Establishing a State and His Succession] (Lahore: Beacon Books, 206), 75-76.

¹⁷⁵ Kaka Khel, “Foundation of the Islamic State,” 82-83, Hameedullah, *Rasool Ullah*, 75-76.

¹⁷⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 3780.

¹⁷⁷ *Ibid*, 1586.

Character traits in addition to the tribal affiliation (a legacy remnant from the pre-Islamic era) were kept alive even after the death of the Prophet. There was a clear focus upon piety, morality, devoutness, companionship with the Prophet, altruism, and administrative acumen besides the tribal prestige and honour. Thus, the selection of Abū Bakr as the first Caliph seems to have taken place more on the grounds of seniority in embracing Islam rather than the tribal nobility as his clan (Banū Taym) was considered comparatively inferior to other Qurayshite clans like the Hashemites, the Umayyads, the Makhzūmites, etc. He was neither a descendent of Quṣayy.¹⁷⁸ So is the case with the selection of the second caliph ‘Umar, neither did he fall under the lineage of Quṣayy nor was his clan Banū ‘Adī (despite being important) at par with the Hashemites, the Umayyads and the Makhzūmites, etc.¹⁷⁹ The same merit-based selection may be seen when the Caliph ‘Umar demoted Khālīd b. al-Walīd from supreme commandership despite of the fact that the latter’s clan Makhzūmites was more influential to ‘Umar’s.¹⁸⁰ It was a challenging task to uphold this merit-based criterion for long which did not take much into account the tribal customs and traditions. By the time, the first generation of Muslims passed away, the political power then mostly got transferred to the people who had come into the fold of Islam shortly before or after the conquest of Mecca.

Following the conquest of Mecca, the Umayyads abandoned patronizing idol-worshipping and became a part of monotheistic government under the ruling Hashemite Prophet. Also, many of the Qurayshite elders moved to Medina and quietly watched out for any possible opportunities in the new establishment under Islam.¹⁸¹ These tribal elders were simply matchless in militaristic, political, and financial fronts and were indispensable for a state; hence they were mostly needed by the then Muslim government.¹⁸² The tribal system in Arabia, historically-recognized leadership status of the Quraysh and uniting the pagan tribes under a banner in their anti-Islam campaigns,

¹⁷⁸ Hameed Ullah, *Rasūlullah*, 197-198; ‘Abd Razzāq al-Ṣan‘ānī, *al-Muṣannaḥ* [Topically Arranged Chain-supported Ḥadīth Collection] (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1983), no. 9767; al-Ḥakīm b. Muḥammad al-Nīsābūrī, *al-Mustadrak ‘alā al-Ṣaḥīḥayn* [Supplement of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* and *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1990), no. 4462; ‘Amr b. Baḥr al-Jāḥiẓ, *al-Bayān wa al-Tabayīn* [Elegance of Expression and Clarity of Exposition] (Beirut: Dār Hilāl, 2002), III, 166.

¹⁷⁹ Klaus Klier, *Khālīd wa ‘Umar* [Hālīd und ‘Umar] (Damascus: Cadmus Publishing, 2001), 50-51.

¹⁸⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁸¹ Mu’nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh*, 597-602.

¹⁸² For instance, the Prophet borrowed fifty thousand dirhams from Ṣafwān b. Umayyah, forty thousand dirhams from ‘Abd Allāh b. Abī Rabī‘ah and forty thousand dirhams from Ḥuwayṭab b. ‘Abd al-‘Uzzā. Similarly, on the occasion of the expedition of Ḥunayn, he borrowed forty protective iron shields from Ṣafwān b. Umayyah. [*Ibid.*, 586].

had predetermined an essential role of the tribal elders in the future of Islam. Besides, unlike the accomplished companions (*muhājir* and *anṣār*), these elders sought prominent active role in political decision-making and desired for materialistic gains.¹⁸³ Consequently, they availed plentiful opportunities; as for instance, during the caliphate of Abū Bakr, these same tribal elders actually headed no less than five out of a total of eleven military campaigns against the apostates. Their share of gains kept on increasing with the passage of time.¹⁸⁴

During the last phase of his life, Caliph ‘Umar had sensed vibes of war between the Hashemites and the Umayyads to win political eminence. As successor caliphs, two strong candidates (‘Uthmān and ‘Alī) belonged to the Umayyads and the Hashemites respectively and the senior cadre too in both clans desired for caliphate to come to their clan.¹⁸⁵ As per some traditions, Caliph ‘Umar advised both ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī not to give preference and prominence to their respective clans for fear of the resurgence of tribal-based groupings in case of their ascension.¹⁸⁶

It was after ‘Uthmān’s accession that the Umayyads made progress. During the second half of his reign, some people felt that the caliphate is protecting the interests of a particular tribe or a clan. It resulted in tribal groupings to safeguard interests of each as was the practice in the days before Islam. Even the pre-Islamic tribal alliances reappeared like the Umayyads with the Makhzūmites and Banū Sahm (‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ d. 43/664)¹⁸⁷ leading Banū al-Muṭṭalib to align with Khuzā‘ah¹⁸⁸ and *anṣār* of Medina¹⁸⁹ who had suffered heavily at the hands of the

¹⁸³ Sulaymān b. Mūsā al-Kalā‘ī, *al-Iktifā’ bimā Taḍammanah min Maghāzī Rasūl Allāh* [Military Expeditions of the Messenger of Allah] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1999), II, 188-189; Mu’nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh*, 614-615.

¹⁸⁴ Mu’nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh*, 606.

¹⁸⁵ It may be verified from the pro-active participation of these elders in the council in the days of ‘Umar. [al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 229 – 233].

¹⁸⁶ Ibid, IV, 192; ‘Alī b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil fī al-Tārīkh* [The Complete History] (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1997), II, 428; William Muir, *The Caliphate: its Rise, Decline and Fall*, (Edinburgh: John Grant, 1915), 188-89.

¹⁸⁷ Mu’nis, *Tārīkh Quraysh*, 627.

¹⁸⁸ Banū Khuzā‘ah had been expelled from Mecca by Quṣayy but later they turned into allies with Abd al-Muṭṭalib. Likewise, in the treaty of Ḥudaybiyah, they entered the pact as an accomplice of Muslims (*ummah*) whereas Banū Bakr supported the idol-worshipping non-believers of Mecca. It was Banū Bakr who trespassed over Banū Khuzā‘ah that had led to the invasion and subsequent conquest of Mecca. Banū Khuzā‘ah’s Buraydah b. al-Huṣayb was a close companion of Caliph ‘Alī. When ‘Uthmān became caliph, Buraydah left for Basra. He initiated the movement in support of Hashemite caliphate in Khurasān. [Ibid, 641-643].

¹⁸⁹ Anṣār’s role was delimited owing to the migrant Qurayshī chiefs. (Ibid, 597-602). Likewise, the incident of al-Ḥarrah weakened them further. (Ibid, 628-629).

Umayyads.¹⁹⁰ During the latter half of the caliphate of ‘Uthmān, a decline in the wealth and affluence caused unrest. There was also some discontent over the governance amongst the close companions of the Prophet from both *ansār* and *muhājir*. Hence, the Quraysh did not retain the prestige, respect, and reverence that it had during the reign of ‘Umar and it turned a factor of revolt against ‘Uthmān.¹⁹¹

The way ‘Uthmān’s government was overthrown and the conditions in which ‘Alī was selected, it created disunity even among the senior companions of the Prophet. This rift did not leave him as strong as were the first three caliphs and there was a clear division amongst the people. Some supported ‘Alī and others sought revenge from the assassins of ‘Uthmān. Revenge seekers were mainly supported by the Umayyads who also wished to swap with the tribal ways. Some chose to distance from the whole scenario. Then there were those who had taken allegiance to ‘Alī but did not enter armed clash.

As the disunity among the senior companions weakened them, it also strengthened the tribal band and those people who were blocked from winning governance due to their late Islam, they now had a smooth sail. The assassination of an Umayyad caliph (‘Uthmān) substantially benefitted them to win rule as otherwise, in presence of venerated companions of the Prophet (like ‘Alī, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh d. 36/656), there was no scope of another Umayyad caliph for decades to come.

1.6.3 Rivalry between Syria (the Ghassanids) and Iraq (the Lakhmids)

A close study of pre and post Islamic history of the Arabs illustrates how the centuries-old warfare between the kingdoms of Ḥira and Syria intensified the rivalry between the Hashemites and the Umayyads and widened its scope from an inter-tribal animosity to a state level contention.

The Arab tribe, the Lakhmids ruled over the kingdom of al-Ḥira (Iraq) under Iran’s Sassanian Empire. They battled against another Arab kingdom of the Ghassanids in Syria. The Syrian kingdom worked as a client state of the Byzantine Empire. Both kingdoms became part of the Caliphate after the Islamic conquests¹⁹² and were two provinces till the times of the second Caliph ‘Umar. However, the governorship of Syria remained in the hands of two members of the

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 626-629.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 633-635, 637-639, Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’* [History of the Caliphs] (Mecca: Maktabat Nizār Muṣṭafā al-Bāz, 1994), 123-124.

¹⁹² Mubārakpūri, *al-Raḥiq al-Makhtūm*, 18-20.

Umayyad clan i.e., Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān (for four years) and then his brother Mu‘āwiah b. Abī Sufyān (for about two decades). Later it was this very province of Syria that revolted against ‘Alī.

The prominence won by Syria may have developed rivalry among the people of Ḥīra (Iraq) and they may have made efforts to shift the capital of Caliph ‘Alī from Medina to their place. During the last few years of ‘Uthmān’s caliphate, Syria and al-Maghrib (North Africa) gained much eminence owing to the Umayyads great influence there. It may have appeared to some that the Umayyads were preferred over other tribes while to others it meant that Syria and al-Maghrib were privileged over Iraq and other provinces.

As mentioned earlier, the Prophet’s early converts (*al-sābiqūn*) started to settle outside Medina that ended up in the martyrdom of ‘Uthmān. It deepened further split in the senior Muslims leaving Caliph ‘Alī surrounded mostly by a group causing him to shift to Kufa, in close vicinity of al-Ḥīra and a substitute for the people of Iraq.

The reason (why) ‘Alī was not quite popular amongst the people of Iraq was that he tried to govern upon the Islamic ideological pattern whereas his close circle was of tribal bend of mind. This intellectual gap turned out to be the major reason behind his assassination. His successor Ḥasan b. ‘Alī faced the same dilemma. The desire to shift the capital to Kufa was the principal cause of the letters sent to Imām Ḥusayn pledging his allegiance (see also subchapter 3.1.4).

In contrast to Kufa, the Umayyads had long leadership of Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān and later of Mu‘āwiya in Syria; hence it was easier for them to shift capital there. Moreover, there was no disparity between the Syrians and Mu‘āwiya and no such gap present that existed between ‘Alī and the people of Kufa.

Conclusion

Classical Islamic literature provides rich material on *fitan* period with details about Ibn ‘Umar’s constructive activism. It also points to the positive effects of his role in *fitan*. He is reported to have influenced important personalities. He has been described as an expert of *fitan* and his position was seen as a role model. However, these are just a few glimpses of the big role played by him over the decades-long *fitan*, and no comprehensive research in this regard has been carried out in both the classical and contemporary Islamic literature. Consequently, a valuable part of the material on the subject remains devoid of historical context and analysis that can potentially give a complete picture of Ibn ‘Umar’s stance, impact of his role during lifetime and legacy in the post-Ibn ‘Umar period. It is also important to note that the approach taken in this research to Ibn ‘Umar’s activities is significantly different from the previous ones. While

fighting for power on religious grounds is still a burning issue and part of Ibn ‘Umar’s reform measures for peacebuilding and his aim to refute it theologically, thus this research fills a gap that is present.

Fitan is a term with a wide range of different meanings and an important subject-area of Islamic Studies with multiple dimensions. But it means in this study civil wars that happened in early Islamic history between 34/655 and 73/692. One of the key elements that caused these battles was ‘rivalry’ amongst various branches of the Quraysh and also between the Ghassanids (Syria) and the Lakhmids (Iraq). Both these contentions anteceded Islam, however, after the advent of Islam a family feud transformed into a major political rift in the fast-expanding Islamic empire. The rebellion by Mu‘āwiya, the governor of Syria against caliph ‘Alī who had recently shifted his capital to Kufa (Iraq) was double-edged. Despite the tribal animosity (present between the Hashemites and the Umayyads), it employed the long-standing political rivalry between Iraq and Syria too.

The assassination of an Umayyad caliph (‘Uthmān) and ascension to power of a Hashemite caliph (‘Alī) from a rival tribe had a lasting impact. Later this led to a tussle between pre and post-Islamic political approaches that resulted in civil wars and a reverse course of the change brought by Islam in the pre-Islamic Arab political system (from *shūrā* back to hereditary tribal kingship).

The sources mostly support the position of Caliph ‘Alī against his opponents, however, they differ on the motives and intentions of those who opposed. Almost all sources pronounce Ibn ‘Umar’s presence and involvement throughout the incidents of *fitan* and mention anecdotes of his reactions to different situations. These reactions lay scattered in Islamic sources and may collectively be called his stance during *fitan*.

Ibn ‘Umar’s persona has been recorded with many shades in various sources ranging from a staunchly pious and God-fearing to a man of breadth and vision. His tolerant and pluralistic views avow co-existence and harmony. He shirked from bloodshed and sources ascribe Ibn ‘Umar as a guiding force and a visionary leader to prevail sense during the frenzied *fitan* years. It seems the vision and wisdom of this personality invites more scholarly attention than ever.

2. Chapter Two: Early Life of Ibn ‘Umar (610-23/644)

There are two objectives of this chapter: first, to discuss Ibn ‘Umar’s life in pre-*fitan* period i.e., first three and a half decades that he spent in the reigns of the Prophet and the Caliphs: Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. Hence the chapter is accordingly divided in three sections. The second aim is to study the salient features of Ibn ‘Umar’s personal and social life which include his household and children, his physical appearance, social activities, and scholarship. Besides offering an overview of Ibn ‘Umar’s personality, the larger aim is to understand the impact of formative influence on the role he played during the times of unrest.

There are four arguments of this chapter: first, the early life incidents reveal that Ibn ‘Umar possessed a visionary personality and it may be assumed that he inherited strong intuition from his father. A sound education and good training further enhanced this talent. Secondly, being a member of *suffa* fraternity (*aṣḥāb al-ṣuffah*), he had acquired an insightful understanding of the Prophetic way of life (*sunnah*). Third, Ibn ‘Umar’s personality had a balance between ‘resistance and accord’ i.e., he resisted against injustice and oppression, but this opposition never caused a harm to overall harmony of the *ummah*. Fourth, his stance on *fitan* was based on knowledge and wisdom as he had acquired scholastic excellence under the care of the Prophet, his father ‘Umar and other senior companions.

2.1 Ibn ‘Umar during the Era of the Prophet (610-11/632)

Ibn ‘Umar's birth circa 610, the year of the beginning of revelation, makes his connection with Islam and the Prophet very interesting so much that the study of his first twenty-three years becomes a study of Islam and *sīrah* from the perspective of a companion. There are two reasons which make the study of this reign indispensable: First, it has left a strong impression in the formation of Ibn ‘Umar’s personality. Second, affiliation to Islam since early Islamic history gives his stance a unique feature in the times of *fitan*.

2.1.1 Introduction

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar was a son of a well-known companion of the Prophet¹⁹³, ‘Umar b. al-

¹⁹³ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 203.

Khattāb (d. 23/644) and Zaynab bint Maz‘ūn¹⁹⁴ (d. 1/622?).¹⁹⁵ Ibn ‘Umar was born in Mecca, however, historical references differ over his year of birth. His age may be estimated from important incidents. Some historians say that he was thirteen at the time of Badr. So, his birth should be in the year 611/612 CE,¹⁹⁶ while others say that he embraced Islam at the age of seven along with his father in 616 CE.¹⁹⁷ Therefore, his birth should be circa 610 CE. The difference on his year of birth also results in the difference on the year of his embracing Islam. He should be five, six or seven when he entered the fold of Islam with father ‘Umar.¹⁹⁸ His family then stayed in Mecca for the next seven years.¹⁹⁹ For being too young, he could not play any significant role in the Meccan society himself, however, he reported numerous incidents of those early years of Islamic history.²⁰⁰ He later migrated to Medina at the age of twelve with his parents²⁰¹ and remained in the close circle of the Prophet through his stay at *Ṣuffa*,²⁰² through his father ‘Umar²⁰³ - the Prophet’s father-in-law, his vizier and a prominent shura member²⁰⁴ - and through his sister, Ḥafṣa (d. 41/665) who was married to the Prophet in 3/625.

2.1.2 Life in *Ṣuffa*

Ṣuffa literally means a covered area, shelter or shade; but hereby it means a shed (a thatched roof with palm leaves) built adjacent to the Prophet’s Mosque to accommodate poor and

¹⁹⁴ Not much information is available about his mother. Some believe that she died as a Muslim in Mecca before migration to Medina whereas others claim that she died in Medina after the migration [*Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3912; Ibn Athīr, *‘Uṣd al-Ghābah*, VII, 135].

¹⁹⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 203.

¹⁹⁶ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, VII, 90; Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī Sulaymān b. Dāwūd, *al-Musnad* [The Chain-Supported] (Egypt: Dār Hījr, 1999), no. 1970.

¹⁹⁷ al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’*. 89.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 209.

²⁰⁰ Refer to sub-chapter 2.6 on Ibn ‘Umar’s scholarship.

²⁰¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3912.

²⁰² For details about *Ṣuffa*, see 2.1.2.

²⁰³ This topic is discussed in section 2.3.2.

²⁰⁴ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh al-Islām* [Islamic History] (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1993), V, 453. ‘Umar had extensive experiences of hard life, international business journeys to Rome and Persia, arbitration of his tribe ‘Adī, ambassadorship of the Quraysh before Islam, advisory of the Prophet and Caliph Abū Bakr and then his own caliphate [Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal, *al-Fārooq ‘Umar* (Cairo: Maktabat al-Nahḍah al-Miṣriyyah, 1963), I, 1-100].

homeless companions of the Prophet.²⁰⁵ Ibn ‘Umar’s noble and well off family was hit by such adversity soon after migration that Ibn ‘Umar is quoted to have said that initially, he had no shelter to spend nights except for the Prophet’s Mosque.²⁰⁶ He spent so much of his time in the mosque that people used to call it his home.²⁰⁷ The prestigious nobility of the Quraysh took a long time to establish themselves in Medina as they had left their all in Mecca. Ibn ‘Umar stated that for as long as seven years (till the Battle of Khaybar in 7/629), he could not have food to his fill.²⁰⁸ In the early training period at *Ṣuffa*, the impoverished and ignorant Arabs were provided with the companionship of the Prophet that trained them as builders of a bright future of Islam.²⁰⁹

Whilst many other companions were engaged in earning and fulfilling domestic duties, the *Ṣuffa* residents could stay close to the Prophet. Ibn ‘Umar reminisced about these early years thus ‘I would be the tenth of the ten companions (when there was not anyone else around the Prophet except these)’. Though in comparison to most of the other nine companions: Abū Bakr (d. 13/634), ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān (d. 35/656), ‘Alī (d. 40/661), ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (d. 32/652), ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/653), Mu‘āz b. Jabal (d. 18/639), Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656), Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693), Ibn ‘Umar was quite young.²¹⁰ It might be during these same days of *Ṣuffa* that Ibn ‘Umar spent full four (or some say eight) years to develop an in-depth understanding of Sūra al-Baqara (the Cow).²¹¹ It was owing to these sessions of meditation over the meaning and text of the Qur’ān that detailed researches have been carried out on his Qur’ānic understanding (see 2.6 for his scholarship).²¹²

Ibn ‘Umar has also provided on various occasions, in various forms experiences of the

²⁰⁵ [see: Ibn Manẓūr, *Lisānal-‘Arab*, IX,195; al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mustadrak*, III,18, no.4294; Abū Nu‘aym Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’ wa Ṭabaqāt al-Aṣfiyā’* [The Adornment of the Saints and the Ranks of the Spiritual Elite] (Egypt: Dār al-Sa‘ādah, 1974), II, 7]

²⁰⁶ Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad* [The Chain-Supported *Ḥadīth* Collection] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 2001), no. 4607, 5839.

²⁰⁷ Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, II, 7.

²⁰⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4243.

²⁰⁹ Mursal Farman, “Qiyām Amn mein Aṣḥāb Suffa kā kirdār [The Role of *Aṣḥāb al-Ṣuffa* in Maintaining Peace]”, *al-Baseerah*, Vo. 3, Issue 6, 2014.

²¹⁰ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, II, 631.

²¹¹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 164.

²¹² Ismā‘īl al-Maymanī, *‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar wa ‘Āthāruh al-Wārida fī Tafṣīr al-Qur’ān* [Ibn ‘Umar and His Exegetical Sayings] (Master Dissertation, Mecca: ‘Umm al-Qurā University, 1990).

Prophet's Mosque and its adjacent thatched shed of *Ṣuffa*. Once, he mentioned that the Prophet opted for an interrogative mode of teaching. He enquired from his companions 'tell me of a tree which resembles a Muslim. It never sheds and comes to fruition every now and then.' Ibn 'Umar reported that he thought of the date palm, but seeing seniors like Abū Bakr and 'Umar quiet, he did not dare to speak. So, when none responded, the Prophet said, 'It is the date palm tree.' Later, on his way home, he said to 'Umar, 'O my father! By God, it came to my mind that it must be the date palm tree.' 'Umar said, 'What prevented you from giving a reply'. He responded, 'I did not see you speaking, so I was disinclined to speak.' 'Umar then said, 'had you replied it would have been dearer to me than so-and-so'.²¹³ This incident not only highlights the Prophet's teaching methodology but hints at two of the prominent traits in Ibn 'Umar's personality: his keen perception and modesty i.e., he intuitively knew the answer but his modesty barred him from taking the lead in presence of his seniors.²¹⁴ These two attributes seem to dominate him especially during the period of *fitan*. Initially he could not play a prominent role in presence of influential personalities like 'Uthmān, 'Alī, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr, etc., though he was fully alive to the repercussions of civil strife intuitively.

Some of the incidents that reveal the nature of the association of Ibn 'Umar with the Prophet are listed here. When Ibn 'Umar was a bachelor yet and used to sleep in the Prophet's Mosque in teenage, he saw that the companions shared their dreams with the Prophet. He desired to do the same and prayed if he possessed any virtue, may God bestow him with a dream.²¹⁵ Hence, he had in the Prophet's Mosque in adolescence. He narrated it thus: 'I saw in a dream as if two Angels have taken hold of me and carried me to the fire. Lo, it was built like the easing of a well and had two pillars like those of a well; and, lo, there were people in it whom I knew and (I) repeatedly cried for God's mercy and refuge from hellfire. Then another Angel joined two others and said unto me: You need not fear'. He narrated this dream to Ḥafsa who narrated it to the Prophet, whereupon the Prophet said: 'Worthy is this man 'Abd Allāh, O that he would pray at night'. Afterwards, 'Abd Allāh slept little at night.²¹⁶

This dream hints at a subtle aspect of his life, whereupon there is an equal chance of getting derailed (a path leading to hell), but at this critical point he sought refuge in God's mercy and his path to paradise lay straight and clear before him. Ibn 'Umar did not name those whom he

²¹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, VI, chapter 60, no. 220, see: https://sahih-bukhari.com/Pages/Bukhari_6_60.php

²¹⁴ Ibn 'Umar's personality traits are discussed in sub-chapter 6.4.1

²¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 6057, 6058.

²¹⁶ *Ibid*, no. 6057; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3738-3740, 1121.

knew. Apart from *fitan*, there is no other event wherein ‘Ibn ‘Umar found himself at the crossroads between peace and war and nothing is more remarkable in his life than his role in this period. This thought is supported by Imām Bayhaqī (d. 458 AD)’s mention of this dream at the onset of his ‘chapter on Dreams and their interpretations’ in his book *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*.²¹⁷ The Prophet interpreted the dream and advised Ibn ‘Umar to stay awake and pray during most part of the nights. Perhaps Ibn ‘Umar narrated this dream to his father who forbade him to keep himself clear from any controversy over the issue of caliphate.

Once Ibn ‘Umar went to the Prophet’s house wherein a pillow filled with date palm roughage was thrown towards him by the Prophet. Out of respect he did not take the pillow²¹⁸ and it lay between them. This incident seems to have taken place later than the year 3/625 when Ḥaḥṣa was married to the Prophet and Ibn ‘Umar became a member of the Prophet’s household. The throw of pillow bespeaks of a frank relationship and his not leaning against the pillow reveals his reverence and sense of responsibility towards the Prophet. In other traditions, Ibn ‘Umar is found to have gone regularly to his sister’s house after she married the Prophet.²¹⁹ Such visits show how effectively Ibn ‘Umar used this relation as an opportunity to learn and benefit from him.

On another occasion, the Prophet made him wear a yellow striped robe²²⁰ that expressly shows his affection for Ibn ‘Umar. He is also reported never to have entered the Prophet’s Mosque through a certain door which the Prophet reserved for ladies.²²¹ This reveals his regard for the Prophet and how he took part in establishing the Medina government since teenage years. Similarly, once Ramaḍān moon was sighted by Ibn ‘Umar (alone) and the Prophet asked his companions to begin fasting from the next day.²²² This tells how much Prophet Muhammad entrusted him and held him dependable despite young age. Once the Jewish community established an illicit relationship between a man and a woman and presented their case before the Prophet whereupon the punishment of lapidation was given as per Torah injunctions. Ibn

²¹⁷ al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*, VII, 10-14.

²¹⁸ Muhammad Yūsuf Kāndihlawī, *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah* [Life of the Companions of the Prophet] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1999), II, 755.

²¹⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4617.

²²⁰ Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 145.

²²¹ Abū Dawūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 465.

²²² ‘Abd Allah al-Dārimī, *al-Sunan* [Prophetic Traditions] (Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Mughnī, 2000), no. 1733; Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ* [The Authentic Collection of Ḥadīth] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1988), no. 3447.

‘Umar too was present amongst the people who pelted stones at the guilty ones.²²³

Ibn ‘Umar was merely sixteen when alcohol was prohibited in 4/626. However, he was amongst those companions who were instructed to destroy liquor stock in the city.²²⁴ If a sixteen-year-old is assigned such a key responsibility, one may infer his standing in the eyes of the Prophet and his character, his 24/7 presence in the mosque, the fact that he was born and raised amongst Muslims, his abstinence from liquor and his pious nature that never indulged in drinking. More significantly, it shows his attentive and careful receptive nature that followed the commandments of the Prophet in letter and spirit.

Ibn ‘Umar’s stay at *Ṣuffa* gave him the opportunity of the Prophet’s mentorship. It was a spiritual experience that reverberated through his ears all his life. For instance, he reports the Prophet’s sayings:

Enmity and amity should be purely for Allāh; only then, thou shall be blessed with the companionship of your Lord. A person may be a devout worshipper, but only by doing so he shall taste *imān*.²²⁵ “O Ibn ‘Umar! Never hope to see the morning in the evening and the evening in the morning. Lay aside a portion of your health for sickness and life for the death as you never know of your standing on the Day of Judgment. Then the Prophet got hold of him and asked to stay in this world like a stranger or a mere traveler and count himself amongst the buried ones.²²⁶ (He continued thus:) ‘O ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar! The currency in vogue on the day of Judgement will be good and bad deeds and not *dinār* or *dirhams* (gold or silver).²²⁷

2.1.3 Military Career

An important aspect of Ibn ‘Umar’s life is his participation in military expeditions in defence

²²³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3635; Haggai Mazuz, *The Religious and Spiritual Life of the Jews of Medina* (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 48-49.

²²⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 6165.

²²⁵ Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr* [The Big Dictionary of Prophetic Traditions] (Cairo: Maktabat Ibn Taymiyyah, 1994), XII, 417.

²²⁶ This same statement has been taken from [Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, III, 302]. With a slight change of words, the same is quoted in: Muḥammad b. ‘Īsā al-Tirmidhī, *al-Jāmi‘ al-Mukhtaṣar min al-Sunan ‘an Rasūl Allāh wa Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥīḥ wa al-Ma‘lūl wa mā ‘alayh al-‘Amal* [The Complete Abridged Collection of Practiced Sunnah of the Prophet along with their authenticity] (Egypt: Maktabat Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalībī, 1975), no. 2333.

²²⁷ Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, III, 302.

of Medina. On the occasion of Badr (2/624), he was merely thirteen²²⁸ and in the days of Uḥud (3/625) he was at a tender age of fourteen.²²⁹ He offered his services both times but did not get permission for participation. Later, he referred to the eve of Badr as the saddest nights of his life.²³⁰ While reminiscing the days of Badr, he said that the companions of the Prophet discussed the number of Muslim soldiers, (which was three hundred and ten), was exactly the same of as that of Saul's army (1010 BC) against the Goliath's. They also added that only those members of Saul's army could cross the river who were steadfast and faithful believers.²³¹ This anecdote shows the mindset he was growing up with.

Ibn 'Umar was most probably not allowed to take part in the battle against a Jewish tribe, Banū Naḍīr (4/625), however, all the incidents were preserved in his memory. Therefore, the *ḥadīth* books ascribe to him not only a detailed account of the battle but he also narrated poetry of the Prophet's poet, Ḥassān b. Thābit (d. 54/674) on that occasion.²³²

It was in the battle of the Confederates (5/627) that Ibn 'Umar was allowed to take part in at the age of 16.²³³ Soon after, he took part in the battle of Banū Qurayṣa (5/627) and narrated its detailed accounts.²³⁴ The same year, the Prophet set out to scatter the tribe Banū al-Muṣṭaliq who had gathered for an attack on Medina. The Muslims won the battle easily with heavy booty and prisoners. The captives were released later after further developments.²³⁵

During the same year (5/627), the Prophet faced wars on many fronts: the Meccans, the Jews, and the Bedouins. In the next year (6/628), serious issues surfaced up by some dissimulators (*munāfiqūn*) like the events of the quarrel between the emigrants (*muhājir*) and the natives of Medina (*anṣār*) and slander against 'Ā'isha b. Abī Bakr (d. 58/678) soon after the expedition

²²⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, VII, 90.

²²⁹ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, II, 66; 'Abd Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, V, 310, no. 9716.

²³⁰ Ibn 'Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XXXI, 96; 'Alī b. 'Abd al-Malik al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl fī Sunan al-Aqwāl wa al-Af'āl* [Treasures of the Doers of Good Deeds] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risāla, 1981), no. 37249.

²³¹ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, II, 78.

²³² *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, 2326.

²³³ *Ibid*, 946, 2326, 4119. Refer to sub-chapter 2.1.1 for the discussion on Ibn 'Umar's age.

²³⁴ 'Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawārī, *Kitāb al-Ma'ārif* [The Book of Knowledge] (Cairo: General Egyptian Book Organization, 1992), 162. According to another tradition, Abū Sinān al-Asadī (d. 5/627) was the first one to take pledge at Ḥudaybiya ['Abd Allah b. Muḥammad Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaf* [Topically Arranged Chain-supported Ḥadīth Collection] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rashīd, 1989), no. 32508].

²³⁵ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, II, 490; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 5374.

of Banū al-Muṣṭaliq. Ibn ‘Umar was aware of the events and he has narrated it in detail.²³⁶ Dissimulation (*nifāq*) became so important for him that during the times of *fitan*, queries were made as to how could one give his approval over debatable issues purely to win favour of the ruling elite. Upon this he replied, ‘While the Messenger of God was alive amongst us, we used to call it dissimilitude (*nifāq*)’.²³⁷ It was in such conditions that Ibn ‘Umar grew young and he held Islam dearly. Once he said so about himself “After the pleasure of embracing Islam, nothing pleased me more than the fact that my heart shunned the worldly desires.”²³⁸

The Truce of Ḥudaybiya (6/628) is another important event in the Islamic history. During this, the Pledge of Pleasing God (*bay‘at al-riḍwān*) was made and according to one tradition, Ibn ‘Umar was the first person to swear allegiance²³⁹ showing his close affiliation with the Prophet by not missing any important incident. There are other reports which represent him the only companion to take this pledge twice.²⁴⁰ Though he was only seventeen, but Ḥudaybiya casted a lasting impression on his personality. Its reflection is visible in his role in the times of *fitan* (see subchapter 5.2.3.1) that whenever two armed groups of Muslims confronted each other, and it seemed likely that *hajj* rites would be disturbed, he would keep his calm following the Prophet’s footsteps. He would say that if permission to perform *hajj* was refused to him, he would do the same as the Prophet had done.²⁴¹ It seems that he had internalized this event e.g., his father’s impassioned reaction and the Prophet’s handling of the situation.²⁴² In other words, Ibn ‘Umar was an excellent observer. I guess, this event made him placid who would not hurry in any matter, remain calm, think deeply and then give a final decision.

Ibn ‘Umar must have remembered the phrase of ‘manifest victory’ used in the Qur’ān for the Ḥudaybiya pact.²⁴³ This phrase was employed for the Prophet’s accommodating dealing towards the Quraysh and its future consequences. Therefore, Ibn ‘Umar must have considered accommodation of tribal inclination to win rule in keeping with the sunnah of the Prophet’s conduct at Ḥudaybiya wherein the Prophet acceded to apparently highly unacceptable

²³⁶ al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Kabīr*, XXIII, 125, 143, 156.

²³⁷ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 7178.

²³⁸ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 159.

²³⁹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2730; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 90.

²⁴⁰ al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6368.

²⁴¹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1639, 1640, 1708.

²⁴² Ismā‘īl b. ‘Umar Ibn Kathīr, *Musnad al-Fārūq* [Traditions Narrated from ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb] (al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafā’, 1991), II, 497.

²⁴³ al-Qur’ān, 48: 1.

conditions of the pagan Meccans (it will further be discussed in chapters 4-5).

Hudaybiyah quickly changed the political situation in the Arabian Peninsula. In the past, if only Mecca was the sole political power, then the Muslims too were recognized as a parallel state. After the peace treaty, Mecca stopped openly joining hands against the Islamic state of Medina. This treaty of non-aggression broke up the coalition that was formed against the Muslims by the Quraysh of Mecca, the Jews of Khaybar and the Bedouin tribes of Ghatfān and Fazāra.²⁴⁴ After each side was left alone, the Muslims began to engage more openly in *da'wah* and military activities.

The next year (7/629), the battle of Khaybar occurred. Ibn 'Umar was part of the victory and was given his due share in the captured lands. He visited his lands annually for its maintenance. He is reported to have said "We could get enough dates only after the victory of Khaybar".²⁴⁵ Ibn 'Umar has reported numerous traditions about this battle. For example, the Prophet forbade the meat of domestic donkeys; he instructed people not to visit mosques if they had eaten raw garlic for its stench²⁴⁶; the share of the cavalry and infantry in the war-booty²⁴⁷; how the Prophet offered prayer on his donkey while going towards Khaybar²⁴⁸; the share of his father 'Umar that he offered in charity after consulting the Prophet²⁴⁹; fulfillment of the needs of the Prophet's family²⁵⁰; the prohibition of temporary marriage (*nikāḥ al-mut'ah*)²⁵¹ and many other such traditions were preserved in the brilliant memory of an eighteen-year-old boy that bespeaks of his scholastic aptitude.

The next significant incident was the battle of Mu'ta (7/629) that occurred the same year and this was the first occasion when Muslims collided with any power outside the Arabian Peninsula. It is reported that an army of three thousand Muslims fought against the Romans who were much stronger than them. During this tragic conflict, all three appointed commanders by the Prophet (Zayd b. Ḥāritha, Ja'far b. Abī Ṭālib and 'Abd Allāh b. Rawāḥa) got killed one after another in quick succession. Finally, the Muslims agreed upon the commandership of

²⁴⁴ Maxime Rodinson, translator: Anne Carter, Muhammad (England: Penguin Books Ltd., 1985), 252-54.

²⁴⁵ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4243.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid*, no. 4215.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid*, no. 4228.

²⁴⁸ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 700.

²⁴⁹ *Ibid*, no. 1632.

²⁵⁰ Abū Dawūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 3006.

²⁵¹ Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, no. 1963.

Khālid b. al-Walīd who managed to save the Muslim troops through a tactful strategy²⁵² and was able to bring them home safely. Ibn ‘Umar reported, ‘coming home in a situation where we could not defeat the enemy, we behaved obsequiously fearing people’s taunting remarks and felt low esteemed too. Finally, we went before the Prophet after *fajr* prayer and admitted that we have retreated from the battlefield’. Upon this the Prophet said that they had returned so that they might attack afresh. Hearing this, they were overjoyed and kissed hands of the Prophet.²⁵³ Ibn ‘Umar also recounted carrying the corpse of the Prophet’s uncle Ja‘far b. Abī Ṭālib who had suffered more than ninety wounds on chest.²⁵⁴ In this expedition, both his hands were cut off whereupon the Prophet gave him the title of the twin-feathered (*dhū al-janāhayn*).²⁵⁵ Later, whenever Ibn ‘Umar passed by the grave of Ja‘far, he offered his salutation in these words: ‘Peace be on you O twin-feathered (Ja‘far)’.²⁵⁶ This anecdote reflects Ibn ‘Umar’s attachment to the Prophet, his reverence to his sayings, the freshness of Prophet’s instructions in his memory and his ability to put them into practice.

The very next year (8/630), the conquest of Mecca took place when Ibn ‘Umar was nineteen. During this, he carefully observed the nineteen-day long ordeal. As for instance, wherefrom and how the Prophet entered Mecca²⁵⁷ and how he smashed the idols.²⁵⁸ On one occasion, the Prophet along with Bilāl, Usāma b. Zayd and ‘Uthmān b. Ṭalḥa entered the Shrine of Ka‘ba and offered prayers inside with closed door. As soon as the Prophet came out, Ibn ‘Umar entered the shrine immediately, asked Bilāl about the precise place of the Prophet’s prayer and offered his prayer on the same spot.²⁵⁹ Similarly, the Prophet’s interesting dealing with ‘Uthmān b. Ṭalḥa, the custodian of the Ka‘ba was also reported by Ibn ‘Umar.²⁶⁰ During the conquest of Mecca, the Prophet appreciated Ibn ‘Umar when he saw him wearing a thin sheet, holding a heavy javelin in his hand and riding an unruly horse..²⁶¹

Ibn ‘Umar was born and bred in Mecca and he migrated to Medina in childhood. After a lapse

²⁵² *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1246, 3709, 3757, 4260, 4261; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 5384.

²⁵³ Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 2647.

²⁵⁴ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4261.

²⁵⁵ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 19365.

²⁵⁶ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3709, 4264.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid*, no. 1576; Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 1866.

²⁵⁸ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4287; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1781.

²⁵⁹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2988; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1329.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid*.

²⁶¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4600.

of eight or nine years, Mecca was conquered and here Muslims won domination over the polytheists. Whenever Ibn ‘Umar passed by his ancestral home and the place where he had spent his boyhood, he was overwhelmed by emotions. He would close his eyes as he remembered the old days. Never did he see towards his home, nor would he ever get down there.²⁶²

The same year, Ibn ‘Umar took part in the battle of Ḥunayn. Initially, Muslims faced turbulence but ultimately gained a decisive victory²⁶³ capturing enormous spoils. Ḥakīm b. Ḥizām (d. 54/674) narrates ‘Once I begged the Prophet who duly granted me. Then again, I asked for more and I was granted even more. Then the Prophet said: ‘O Ḥakīm! This wealth is tempting and endearing. Whosoever takes it with contentment and complacency is blessed with fulfillment. The one, who seeks it with greed, finds it devoid of benediction and remains discontented. (More so,) the upper (i.e., giving) hand is better than the lower (i.e., receiving) one’.²⁶⁴ Ibn ‘Umar observed all these incidents in his youthful days that polished him up such that the latter rulers would write to him to let them know if he needed anything. His invariable reply was: ‘I neither beseech from anyone nor I refuse someone’s gift. The upper hand is better than the lower one’.²⁶⁵

In this battle, a slave girl fell in the share of ‘Umar who gave her to his son. Ibn ‘Umar sent her to his mother’s household Banū Jumaḥ for grooming while he himself circumambulated the Ka‘ba. No sooner did he finish, the news reached him that the Prophet has freed all the prisoners of war. Hearing this, he immediately handed her over to the Prophet.²⁶⁶

The same year (8/630), Ibn ‘Umar was sent in an expedition to Banū Jadhīma under the command of Khālīd b. al-Walīd. The four-year training period from the battle of the Trench (5/527) to the battle of Ḥunayn (8/630) had groomed and refined his skills as a mediator. An early indication of his mediation ability may be seen in this battle. When the commander issued orders of killing of innocent people under some delusion, Ibn ‘Umar alongside other senior companions like Sālim *mawlā* Abī Ḥudhayfa (d. 12/633), etc., refused to kill prisoners in their custody. However, he simultaneously upheld strong allegiance to the commander Khālīd and

²⁶² Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, I, 230.

²⁶³ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4339, 7189; al-Wāqīdī, *al-Maghāzī*, III, 881.

²⁶⁴ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3143.

²⁶⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 71.

²⁶⁶ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, II, 490. Some of the historians allay this incident towards the battle of Banū al-Muṣṭaliq. [Ibid; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 5374].

none of his acts gave rise to any uprising against the leader. The Prophet renounced Khālid's action upon receiving the news that was an appreciation of Ibn 'Umar's stance.²⁶⁷ From *ta'wīl al-ḥawādith* (looking the events holistically) point of view, Ibn 'Umar is found meticulous and determinant from the very early stage. The incident also reveals the extent of his influence despite young age and with no designation because both *muhājir* and *anṣār* companions followed this decision and refused to kill their war prisoners.

Khālid was one of the late converts to Islam. He was brave, earnest, and hardworking. However, such mistakes were the result of his delayed conversion and lack of edification. He was also criticized and held accountable by the Prophet and numerous companions, but he was given another chance after foregoing earlier mistakes. Ibn 'Umar had joined military expeditions alongside these recent converts. He must have closely observed the mistakes they committed; the way they were made accountable for their behaviour and were given a second chance. Perhaps, it was this same observation that influenced his attitude in dealing with *fitan*.

The positive role that Ibn 'Umar played in the above expedition, he repeated the same positivity in its narration. There are many traditions wherein Khālid has been criticized for his misconduct,²⁶⁸ however, the tradition reported by Ibn 'Umar maintains a balance in his assessment. Where there is criticism of Khālid in his reported tradition, there is also an excuse of misunderstanding.²⁶⁹ Ibn 'Umar remained active and was sent to a few other battles too, for example, he was sent to Najd where his share comprised of thirteen camels.²⁷⁰

The next year (9/630), Prophet Muhammad led his last military expedition. This was a clash between the rising Muslim state with the Roman empire. Excepting a few, all the Muslims took part in it. Ibn 'Umar was also present in the battlefield and narrated many incidents of this expedition. As an example, he reported that on way to Tabūk, the Muslims crossed Hījr where there were remains of the ruined houses of the people of Thamudites. The Prophet instructed his companions that whenever they happened to cross the relics and ruins of the punished people it should hold deterrence for them.²⁷¹ Ibn 'Umar added that the Prophet directed them to discard

²⁶⁷ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4339, 7189.

²⁶⁸ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīra*, II, 428-29.

²⁶⁹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4339, 7189.

²⁷⁰ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3134, 4339; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1749; Mālik b. Anas, *al-Muwatta'* [Well-Trodden Path] (Abu Dhabi: Mu'assasat Zāyid b. Sulṭān, 2004, no. 1637; Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, II, 430.

²⁷¹ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-'Āthār* [An Exposition of the Problematic Works] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1994), no. 3742.

the dough kneaded with the water of the wells here ²⁷² and to consume water of only those wells wherefrom the she-camels drank.²⁷³

2.1.4 Wedding Attempts

Ibn 'Umar's attempts to get married is an interesting subject during the lifetime of the Prophet and can assist in understanding numerous reports about him. According to a tradition, Ibn 'Umar compared himself to his father and said that unlike his father he was hypersexual.²⁷⁴ On the contrary, other traditions cite him devoted to worship so much so that he desired to remain a bachelor. It was his sister Ḥafṣa who advised him in these words: 'Get married. If your kids die in your hands, you shall earn reward. If they outlive you, they shall pray for you'.²⁷⁵ Ḥafṣa's advice to Ibn 'Umar should have been after consultation with her husband, the Prophet.

Both contradictory reports should be analyzed in proper historical contexts. Ibn 'Umar is said to have made two unsuccessful attempts of marriage in Banū 'Adī (his father's tribe) and Banū Jumāḥ (tribe of his mother).²⁷⁶ Similarly, it was probably not long after the conquest of Mecca that he married 'Āmina, sister of 'Uthmān b. 'Affān.²⁷⁷ She was a new convert and used to work as a lady-hairdresser in the days before Islam.²⁷⁸ Ibn 'Umar was very fond of her, contrary to his father 'Umar. History does not state the reason. It could be her luxurious lifestyle or lack of religious understanding for being a new convert. Thus, he asked the son to divorce her which Ibn 'Umar refused to accept. In ancient Arab society, such a command from a father was not an ignominious act. Since the Prophet was related to him, therefore, it was natural that this incident was reported before him. It was in this quandary that he divorced 'Āmina unwillingly without realizing that as per Sharī'ah, the divorce was not pronounced in *ṭuhr* (gap between two periods). Later, when it was known that she was divorced during menstruation period, 'Umar

²⁷² *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3378.

²⁷³ al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā'il al-Nubuwwa*, V, 234.

²⁷⁴ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, 324.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, IV, 170.

²⁷⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 5720, 6136; al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-'Āthār*, no. 7352, 7354; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 5142; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 49.

²⁷⁷ Imām Ibn Ḥajar has noted name of this woman as 'Āmina bint Ghifār in one place (1/318) *al-Nawwār* in another (9/347) with further explanation that her name was 'Āmina b. Ghifār but title was *al-Nawwār* (Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, I, 318, IX, 347). Likewise, her name has been mentioned as 'Āmina b. 'Ammār too. Ibn Sa'd has mentioned her name as 'Āmina b. 'Affān. It is highly likely as a woman of such name did exist at that time. [Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IIX, 269].

²⁷⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, no. 10770, IV, 4.

sternly reprimanded the son for making mistake. Finally, Ibn ‘Umar had to follow the prescribed procedure of Islamic divorce.²⁷⁹ Thus, an experience of his youth became a point of reference for later Muslim generations on the Islamic law of divorce.

A nineteen or twenty-year-old youth with strong manhood and an aspiration to settle down earlier in life; next a slave-girl slipped through his fingers; two failed marriage attempts and then finally this forced divorce addled him so much that such a lapse seems plausible. Probably, the report on his intention to remain single belongs to the period of despair whereupon Ḥafṣa’s advice to her brother dates from the later period.

Further consideration also reveals causes of barring his son from marrying ‘Āmina as is already mentioned about her late Islam shortly before the conquest of Mecca.²⁸⁰ Abū Sufyān and his household embraced Islam in the same days²⁸¹ and he requested the Prophet to allow ‘Alī marry his daughter. But the Prophet sternly turned it down²⁸² lest it disturb the religious life of his daughter, Fāṭima, who was married to ‘Alī.²⁸³ It was probably the same fear that led ‘Umar forbid his son to marry a new convert woman of the prestigious Umayyad clan. Thus, we may construe that Ibn ‘Umar was trained with the same strictness that had groomed the senior companions. It was in these days that the Prophet spoke to zestful, teenage Ibn ‘Umar how wedlock presses a man with the domestic responsibilities ‘Verily, your wife has right over you’.²⁸⁴ Between 5/626 and 6/627 many such incidents took place with the companions that Qur’ānic injunctions were revealed about them.²⁸⁵ Recalling those years, Ibn ‘Umar said ‘While the Messenger of God was alive amongst us, we did not much intermingle with our wives lest Qur’ānic injunctions should reveal about us’.²⁸⁶

²⁷⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 5251-5252, 5258, 5264; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 6163; Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IIX, 269.

²⁸⁰ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, VIII, 4.

²⁸¹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, II, 105-6.

²⁸² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2449

²⁸³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3110

²⁸⁴ Muhammad b. Aḥmad al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur’ān* [A Comprehensive Work on the Juristic Rulings of the Qur’ān] (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub al-Miṣriyyah, 1996), XV, 169.

²⁸⁵ al-Qur’ān, 33: 37; 24: 6-10; 58: 1-6.

²⁸⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2798; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI, 211.

2.1.5 Love for the Prophet

Another remarkable bearing in Ibn 'Umar's character is his devout fondness and deep reverence for the Prophet that was matchless. He was almost twenty-one when the Prophet passed away in 11/632. The sixteen-year long companionship was the most significant period of his life. Later, the slightest mention of the Prophet's name welled his eyes up with tears. His passionate emulation and covetous following of the Prophet made others think of him as crazy or mad.²⁸⁷ He keenly searched for the places where the Prophet chose to sojourn or pray at home or in journey.²⁸⁸ He would visit those places to soothe himself after the Prophet's demise and make sure to emulate his actions there. He sat under the tree where the Prophet had sat and would never leave until he had watered it lest it may wither away.²⁸⁹ He would trim his hair and beard and dyed them in the same fashion and wear the similar style of clothes and shoes. Besides these outward manifestations, in his manners, conduct and worship he tried to follow the Prophet in letter and spirit.²⁹⁰ All this shows that his relationship with the Prophet's life was not just limited to scholarly nature. It was rather an affiliation of the heart, mind, and soul and this deep association had made him a walking and talking source of *sīrah*. The love of the Prophet was so ingrained in his external and internal personality that if any aspect of his life (such as appearance, academic services, social activities, etc.) is studied, it reflects the Prophet's love.

2.2 The Reign of Abū Bakr (11/632-13/634)

Soon after the Prophet's demise, there was a wave of rebellion and apostasy in Arabia. Ibn 'Umar was also present in a meeting that was called by the newly elected Caliph Abū Bakr to deal with the crisis. Ibn 'Umar recounted in detail the caliph's consultation with other companions²⁹¹ and then deployment of eleven military companies to crush the insurgence.

Ibn 'Umar was part of the troops sent in 11/632 under the leadership of Khālid b. al-Walīd towards

²⁸⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 145; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 213.

²⁸⁸ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no 483, 491-92, 505, 1553, 1574, 1575, 1767, 1769; Ya'qūb al-Faswī, *al-Ma'rifaḥ wa al-Tārīkh* [Knowledge and History] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1981), I, 491; Fawzī b. 'Abd al-Ṣamad Fiṭānī, *Fiqh Ibn 'Umar fī Tatabbu' al-'Āthār wa Amākin al-'Ibādah* [Ibn 'Umar's Understanding in Pursuing the Prophet's Monuments], SalafCenter, URL: <https://salafcenter.org/2740/>.

²⁸⁹ Ibn Athīr, *'Usd al-Ghābah*, no. 3082.

²⁹⁰ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 105-142; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 322-323.

²⁹¹ al-Hindī, *Kanz al-'Ummāl*, no. 14164.

Ṭalḥa b. Khuwaylid (of Banū Asad in North-East of Medina).²⁹² This company was later dispatched towards Mālik b. Nuwayra (of Banū Tamīm at Buṭāḥ). Khālīd killed Mālik b. Nuwayra and sought his widow in marriage. Ibn ‘Umar and Abū Qatāda al-Anṣarī (d. 54/676)’s stance became famous who had expressed their displeasure over the incident. Both also declined the invitation of the subsequent wedding. Abū Qatāda returned to Medina and pledged never to take part in any battle under Khālīd whereas Ibn ‘Umar remained with the troops. Moreso, he advised Khālīd to seek permission from the Caliph prior to the nuptial knot but Khālīd did not do so. Ibn ‘Umar’s discretion and wisdom later won approval of Abū Bakr and he ordered an immediate separation between Khālīd and the woman.²⁹³

This incident manifests few attributes of Ibn ‘Umar: First, the sanctity of innocent life that was the basis of his stance during the times of unrest. Second, he always stood for the truth despite young age, and he could not be silenced easily. Rather he would express his opinion openly and never became part in any wrongdoing. Third, peaceful non-violent resistance and keeping unity intact. Likewise, he pointed out the commander Khālīd’s erroneous judgement, but did not flare up the issue to develop a rift amongst the troops and promoted harmony. Fourth, he exercised this influence without holding any commanding position. His participation like an ordinary soldier gave a practical demonstration to a tradition of the Prophet, narrated by Ibn ‘Umar, ‘... God endears those who fear Him surreptitiously so that no one seeks for them when they pass away and while they are alive, no one recognizes them. Such persons are torchbearers of righteousness and beacon house of knowledge and wisdom’.²⁹⁴

Ibn ‘Umar enjoyed a distinct position in troops under Khālīd because he was also working as a link between the army and the high command. The senior leadership of the companions had differences over maintaining or dismissing Khālīd from commandership. Both opinions about late convert, Khālīd, must have influenced Ibn ‘Umar’s moderate perspective of *fitan*, for a major power involved in all battles of *fitan* was led by late converts or their progeny.

Then the armed division headed towards Yamāma where Musaylima had declared his prophethood. Here ‘Ikrima b. Abī Jahl (d. 15/636) and Shuraḥbīl b. Ḥasana (d. 18/639) had not been successful so far. The victory was won after a tough fight and Ibn ‘Umar narrated a

²⁹² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 248-249.

²⁹³ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A‘yān*, VI, 14-15; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, VI, 560.

²⁹⁴ Yaḥyā b. al-Ḥusayn al-Shajarī, (Edited and Arranged by): Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-‘Abshamī, *Tartīb al-Amālī al-Khamīsīyya* [The Book of Dictations] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2001), no. 2557.

detailed account of the battle. For example, the gallantry and courage of Abū ‘Aqīl al-Anṣārī (d. 12/633)²⁹⁵ and ‘Ammār b. Yāsir (d. 37/660)²⁹⁶, Musaylama (d. 12/633)’s murder at the hands of Waḥshī (d.37/660)²⁹⁷. Later ‘Umar severely reprimanded both his sons for missing the honor of martyrdom like their uncle Zayd b. al-Khaṭṭāb (d. 12/633) in the battle. The reply of the dutiful son, Ibn ‘Umar was that he did his utmost but could not make it.²⁹⁸

In this expedition, Ibn ‘Umar also took part in one-on-one fight.²⁹⁹ A companion, ‘Abd (Allāh) b. Makhrama was in extremis when he asked for water to break his fast. Ibn ‘Umar rushed to a pond of water but it was covered with blood. He stirred it to draw some clear water but when he went back to ‘Abd (Allāh) b. Makhrama, he had already died.³⁰⁰ Ibn ‘Umar presented a detailed account of all the concerted campaigns to his father.³⁰¹

2.3 The Reign of ‘Umar (13/634 - 23/644)

Ibn ‘Umar was twenty-two when his father ‘Umar was elected as caliph. He had to wait till he was twenty-eight partake in the battle of Jalūlā’ (Iraq) in 16/637.³⁰² ‘Umar temporarily stopped him from military expedition for fear of any moral lapse.³⁰³ These restrictions might have been imposed as in the battle of Jalūlā’, a very pretty slave-girl fell in Ibn ‘Umar’s share. He was so much yielded to her charms that could not control his emotions and started kissing her in public. This incident perhaps reached ‘Umar’s ears and he imposed some restrictions on him.³⁰⁴ ‘Umar probably wished to keep his son closer and nurture in him the qualities of piety, earnest religious sense, purity of character and spiritual cleansing.³⁰⁵ Later these limitations was lifted, and he

²⁹⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, 473-475.

²⁹⁶ Ibid, III, 454.

²⁹⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4072.

²⁹⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 292.

²⁹⁹ Sa‘īd b. Manṣūr al-Jawzajānī, *al-Sunan* [Prophetic Traditions] (India: al-Dār al-Salafiyya, 1982), no. 2690.

³⁰⁰ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 19414.

³⁰¹ Kāndihlawī, *Ḥayāt al-Ṣaḥābah*, II, 149.

³⁰² Muhammad b. al-Hasan al-Shaybānī, *al-‘Āthār* [The Traditions] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), I, 13, no. 9.

³⁰³ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Manāqib Amīr al-Mu‘minīn ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb* [Virtues of Caliph ‘Umar] (Oman: Dār Ibn Khaldūn, 1996), 151.

³⁰⁴ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no 16656.

³⁰⁵ al-Maymanī, *‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar*, II, 400.

took part in battles in Iraq along with his brother, ‘Ubayd Allāh.³⁰⁶

In 20/641 (at the age of thirty-two), Ibn ‘Umar was attacked in the dark of the night, when he was in Khaybar to maintain his lands. This incident prompted ‘Umar to deport the Jews from Khaybar to the newly conquered settlements.³⁰⁷ It is noteworthy that after the defeat in the Khaybar expedition (7/629), the Jews had been living here on the condition that they would pay half the production to the Muslims as rent and could be deported in future whensoever the Muslims would desire.³⁰⁸ In short, this attack on Ibn ‘Umar might be considered as an act that put the lid on the Jews expulsion from Khaybar.

Ibn ‘Umar also participated in the victorious expeditions of Nahāwand (21/642) and Egypt (25/646-18/639). He built a house in Egypt³⁰⁹ and here more than forty people narrated from him traditions of the Prophet.³¹⁰

2.3.1 Marriage and Family

Some historical records mention three and a few others four of his wives, however, Ibn ‘Umar had a long companionship with only one wife. From ‘Āmina, he had no child. His second wife was probably Umm ‘Alqama bint ‘Alqama b. Nāqish al-Muḥāribiya who gave birth to his elder son, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān. Ibn ‘Umar was known by this same epithet.³¹¹ His third wife was Sahla bint Mālik al-Shahḥāj who, according to a tradition, mothered Zayd. However, some historians believe that Zayd was the son of an *umm al-walad* (slave-girl).

Ṣafiyya b. Abī ‘Ubayd (d. 73/629) is the only wife whom Ibn ‘Umar accompanied for almost six decades. The marriage took place during the caliphate of ‘Umar in 16/637.³¹² It seems that Ibn ‘Umar’s financial condition was not very good even during the reign of his father. His father, ‘Umar paid 400 dirhams on his behalf as dower money whereas he stealthily made

³⁰⁶ Mālik, *al-Muwatta’*, no. 1, II, 687.

³⁰⁷ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2730; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 112; Vecchia Vaglieri, L., “*Khaybar*”, in: EI2, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0503>; Wilfred Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 74.

³⁰⁸ Martin Lings, *Muhammad: His life Based on the Earliest Sources* (Rochester: Inner Traditions/Bear, 2006), 267.

³⁰⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 8.

³¹⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 306.

³¹¹ Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 142.

³¹² Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VII, 85.

additional payment of 200 dirhams to Ṣafiyya.³¹³ The couple spent a blissful life together and many interesting anecdotes about the couple have been reported.³¹⁴

Historical records mention sixteen children (twelve sons and four daughters) of Ibn ‘Umar³¹⁵ whereas some sources increase the number to twenty (thirteen son and seven daughters).³¹⁶ Amongst these, seven were born to Ṣafiyya.³¹⁷ Ibn ‘Umar had very few children from other wives. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān was born to Umm ‘Alqama whereas there are conflicting reports about Zayd’s birth to Sahla b. Mālīk. The rest of the kids were mothered by slave-girls.³¹⁸

All the children of Ibn ‘Umar were named after prominent companions of the Prophet and he advised them to follow the same practice.³¹⁹ By naming his children after the personalities around the Prophet, Ibn ‘Umar not only strove to embody *sīrah* in his life but also endeavored to transfer it to the next generations. There is an interesting anecdote that is worth quoting here, “On hearing a poet praising his son in these words ‘Ibn ‘Umar’s Bilāl is the best Bilāl’, he

³¹³ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VIII, 345.

³¹⁴ For example, the anecdotes of the fish, of the grapes, of the beggar, of the hunger, etc. [Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 105-142, 165-167; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 303-322; Sa‘īd b. Manṣūr al-Jawzjānī, *al-Sunan* (India: Al-Dār al-Salafiyya, 1982), I, 217; ‘Abd Allah Ibn Abī al-Dunyā, *al-Juz‘* [A Booklet on Ḥadīth] (Beirut: Dār Ibn Ḥazam, 1997), no. 50.

³¹⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 142-143.

³¹⁶ Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Kitāb al-Thiqāt* [The Book of Trustworthy Narrators] (Hyderabad: Majlis Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmāniyyah, 1973-1983), no. 5478, V, 416; ‘Abd Allāh ibn Muslim ibn Qutaybah al-Dīnawārī, *‘Uyūn al-Akḥbār* [The Book of Choice Narratives] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1997), IV, 114-115; Abū al-Faraj ‘Alī ibn al-Ḥusayn al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-‘Aghānī* [The Book of Songs] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), XIII, 43-44; Muṣ‘ab b. ‘Abd Allah al-Zubayrī, *Nasab Quraysh* [The Lineage of the Quraysh] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, n.d.), 357; Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baghdādī, *Kitāb al-Muḥabbar* [The Variegated Book] (Beirut: Dār al-‘Āfāq al-Jadīdah, n.d.), 404; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam fī Tārīkh al-Mulūk wa al-‘Umam* [History of Nations] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1992), VIII, 95; Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr al-Talīmāsānī al-Burrī, *al-Jawharah fī Nasab al-Nabīy wa Aṣḥābih al-‘Asharah* [Lineage of the Prophet and His Ten Companions] (Riyadh: Dār al-Rifā‘ī, 1983), II, 185; al-Hādī al-Juwaynī, “Shahīrāt Tūnus [Famous Women of Tunisia]”, Turess, 28/08/2018, <<https://www.turess.com/alchourouk/2014580>>.

³¹⁷ Five sons (Abū Bakr, Abū ‘Ubayda, Wāqīd, ‘Abd Allāh and ‘Umar) and two daughters (Ḥafṣa and Sawda) [Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VIII, 472].

³¹⁸ It included six sons (Sālim, ‘Ubayd Allāh, Ḥamza, Bilāl, Abū Salama and Mu‘āwiya) and five daughters (‘Ā’isha, Qilāba, Umm Salama, Umm Hishām and Zaynab) [Ibid, IV, 142-143; Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Thiqāt*, no. 5478, V, 416; Ibn Qutayba, *‘Uyūn al-Akḥbār*, IV, 114-115; al-Iṣfahānī, *Kitāb al-‘Aghānī*, XIII, 43-44]. It could not be verified whether Zaynab’s mother was his wife or a concubine.

³¹⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 5638.

rebuffed him that his claim was baseless, and the Prophet's Bilāl is the best Bilāl".³²⁰ This clearly shows that Ibn 'Umar did not pamper his kids. By telling them that "Bilāl of the Prophet was better", Ibn 'Umar reminded them of the exemplary role Bilāl (of the Prophet) had played. This hammering attitude encouraged his next generation to lead a constructive life and play a positive role to become better people.

Many of Ibn 'Umar's children earned fame for upholding their father's knowledgeable disposition. His son Sālim (d. 106/728) won prominence in matters of piety and knowledge amongst his peers (see subchapter 6.1.2).³²¹ Likewise, Ibn 'Umar's son 'Abd Allāh was a notable personality of the Quraysh who was bequeathed the will of his father.³²² Sawda was the most well-known amongst his daughters who was married to a famous scholar, 'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (see subchapter 6.1.2). Ibn 'Umar's daughter Zaynab was also talented. There is little information about her in the sources as she died at a very young age in the city of Kairouan (Tunisia) and subsequently buried there. It was owing to her burial that the graveyard was named as the graveyard of the Quraysh.³²³

2.3.2 Father-Son Relationship

Ibn 'Umar had a special relationship with his father. There are numerous incidents that reveal how punctiliously 'Umar had trained his son. Once, Ibn 'Umar and his father journeyed alongside the Prophet. Ibn 'Umar accidentally rode on a she-camel that was hard to handle and tended to move ahead of the Prophet's camel. 'Umar scolded and advised his son not to go ahead of him. During the same journey, the Prophet bought the said she-camel from 'Umar and told Ibn 'Umar, 'This is yours. Use it the way you like'.³²⁴ We may conclude that the Prophet felt the strain of stern training and by this purchase he intended to ease some burden.

Likewise, during his caliphate, 'Umar saw healthy camels in the market. Upon inquiry he was told that they belonged to his son 'Abd Allāh. When Ibn 'Umar was investigated, he stated that weak camels were bought and were let to graze in the endowed meadows of the Muslims. His

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 459.

³²² Ibid, IV, 150; Muḥammad Ibn Ḥibbān al-Bustī, *Mashāhīr 'Ulamā' al-Amsār* [Biographies of Learned Men from various Regions] (al-Manṣūra: Dār al-Wafā, 1991), 108.

³²³ al-Baghdādī, *al-Muḥabbar*, 404; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VIII, 95; al-Burri, *al-Jawharah fī Nasab al-Nabīy wa Aṣḥābih al-'Asharah*, II, 185; al-Juwaynī, "Shahīrāt Tūnus".

³²⁴ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2115, 2610.

father ‘Umar replied ‘The people have let your camels graze freely as they belonged to the son of the Caliph. (This practice cannot be put up with hence) sell the camels, retain the original price and deposit the rest in the state treasury’.³²⁵ Likewise, in the battle of Jalūlā’ (16/637), Ibn ‘Umar bought trade goods worth 40,000 from his own share of war-proceeds and brought it to Medina. ‘Umar made a strict inquiry whether he availed undue facilitation on account of being the son of the Caliph. Hence, he sold out the goods at 400,000 and gave his son 80 thousand. The remaining 320,000 were distributed amongst the participants of the battle of Jalūlā’. ‘Umar even visited his daughter-in-law – ‘Abd Allāh’s wife – and instructed her to hand over any leftover things which she readily did.³²⁶ On another occasion, Ibn ‘Umar and his brother ‘Ubayd Allāh were on a return journey from a battlefield of Iraq. Upon crossing Basra, the Governor Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (d. 44/664) gave him the remittance - an amount sent regularly to the Caliph. He put forward the suggestion that Ibn ‘Umar might purchase some lucrative commodity to be sold in Medina, pay the principal amount to his father (Caliph) and keep the profit himself. ‘Umar took a stern action and despite agitation of ‘Ubayd Allāh and intermediary efforts made by other notables, half of the profit was duly taken from them.³²⁷ These examples show that during his father’s reign, he was not given any extra privileges, but contrarily, the father put on many restrictions on his children, and they were under constant surveillance. On an occasion, when ‘Umar was having meal at his son’s house, he noticed that the food was a bit oilier. He probed about the extravagance and reminded him that the Prophet’s food had scant greasiness. The son apologized and pledged not to repeat the same.³²⁸ These anecdotes reveal, ‘Umar never allowed his family members to live beyond the basic needs of that time.

There was a marked difference in the personalities of Ibn ‘Umar and his brother ‘Ubayd Allāh. Whenever ‘Umar disciplined his sons for any wrongdoing, Ibn ‘Umar’s attitude was quiet and submissive whereas ‘Ubayd Allāh would argue and react. When ‘Umar was assassinated, three suspects got killed at the hands of ‘Ubayd Allāh and consequently he had to be imprisoned. Ibn ‘Umar, on the other hand, kept his calm and remained undeterred.³²⁹ The same difference can be seen between the two brothers during the *fitan* period. ‘Abd Allāh did not participate or

³²⁵ Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā* [Grand Collection of Sunnah] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2003), no. 11811.

³²⁶ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 33779.

³²⁷ Mālik, *al-Muwaṭṭa’*, no. 2534.

³²⁸ Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, no. 3361; Aḥmad b. ‘Abd Allāh al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍirah fī Manāqib al-Asharāh* [Fresh Gardens in Praise of the Ten Blessed Companions] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), II, 367.

³²⁹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, V, 478-80.

support any side in the civil wars while ‘Ubayd Allāh supported the Syrian side and got killed in the battle of Şiffin. It may be said that owing to the difference of these personalities, high moral values, piety, abstinence from sins, earnest devout worship, and other such qualities that ‘Umar preferred ‘Abd Allāh (Ibn ‘Umar). It was this exceptional relationship that ‘Umar handed him down a commendable nosegay of instructions such as God-consciousness, thankfulness, good will, altruism, patience, steadfastness in the face of adversity, faithfulness, excellence in virtues, perseverance, and alike.³³⁰ It was Ibn ‘Umar who (in 23/644) looked after his father after the assassination attempt was made, ensured implementation of his last will and testament, paid off his debt and conducted his burial and last rites. ‘Umar bequeathed him the responsibility to seek permission of burial adjacent to the Prophet from ‘Ā’isha after and named him as an advisor and not as a member of the council for electing the new caliph. All this bears out ‘Umar’s confidence in the competence of his son.³³¹ Ibn ‘Umar’s high obedience to his father did not diminish even after his death. His regard was so great that he always held the progeny of his father’s friends in great esteem and treated them well.³³²

His father endeared him very much owing to these qualities of head and heart. ‘Umar wished his son to outlive him and serve. One ‘Umar said,

I wish that all my kids may die before me in my hands, and I recite prayer of death *innā li Allāh wa innā ilayh rāji‘ūn*³³³ upon their demise except for ‘Abd Allāh. I want him to outlive me so that people may profit from him.³³⁴

He wished Ibn ‘Umar to teach and enlighten the masses and not play any role in the political arena.³³⁵ This could be for any reason: temptations and trials of politics or Ibn ‘Umar’s own aptitude and propensities.

³³⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *al-Riyāḍ al-Naḍirah*, II, 397; Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, 359; Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *Shu‘ab al-‘Imān* [Branches of Faith] (Mumbai: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2003), no. 2501.

³³¹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, III, 337-338, 360-61.

³³² *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2552.

³³³ The Arabic prayer means: Verily we belong to God, and verily to Him do we return.

³³⁴ al-Baghawī, *Mu‘jam al-Ṣaḥābah*, III, 481.

³³⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 227-22.

2.4 Physical Appearance

Ibn ‘Umar was of average height³³⁶ but seemed taller than average men³³⁷ with a well-built body. He had a tawny complexion and long hair³³⁸ that touched his shoulder³³⁹. He would generally trim his moustache and keep a long beard.³⁴⁰ As per Islamic tradition, he would shave his head bald after performing *ḥajj* or *‘umrah* except for once or twice when he had a haircut.³⁴¹ With the passage of time, his hair fell from the middle of his head.³⁴² He would commonly dye his grey hair,³⁴³ slightly oil it twice a day³⁴⁴ and would wear perfume.³⁴⁵ Like a practicing Muslim, he performed ablution before prayer and took shower for Friday / Eid prayers or wearing *Ihrām* (sacred state to perform *ḥajj* or *‘umrah*). He would try to avoid excess use of cloth in shirt (*qamīṣ*) or trouser (*izār*) and wore turban with the loose end hung between his shoulders.³⁴⁶ He wore rings in his hands³⁴⁷ with his name (‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar) carved on it.³⁴⁸ Likewise, his shoes were usually made of tanned leather.³⁴⁹

The significance in Ibn ‘Umar’s appearance is his emulation of the Prophet in every possible way. It was the result of his intense love for the Prophet and devotion to follow him in all respects (see subchapter 2.1.5).³⁵⁰ Yet the intrinsic merits of simplicity, God-consciousness, and piety did not touch upon his appearance. His was a charismatic personality known for his subtlety and immaculate attire.³⁵¹

³³⁶ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 7.

³³⁷ Abū Nu‘aym, *Ma‘rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, III, 1707, no. 4287

³³⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, IV, 156.

³³⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 7.

³⁴⁰ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 449, IV, 178.

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Ibid.

³⁴³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, No 66, I, 44.

³⁴⁴ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 25558, V, 231; Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 157.

³⁴⁵ Mālik, *al-Muwatta’*, no. 18, I, 110; ‘Abd Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 5306, III, 198.

³⁴⁶ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 174.

³⁴⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, II, 299.

³⁴⁸ Ibid, IV, 308.

³⁴⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 66, I, 44.

³⁵⁰ Mistu, *‘AbdAllāh b. ‘Umar*, 21-23.

³⁵¹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 181, 157, 173-174.

2.5 Social Activism

Ibn ‘Umar was benevolent and generous in his conduct with people. He was liberal in payments and kind in bestowing favors so much so that the lender would sometimes feel that Ibn ‘Umar might be testing him.³⁵² He was actively involved in social activism and tried to bring social change through empowering weak members of society. He is said to have liberated more than a thousand slaves. Often when people pointed out betrayal on part of his slaves, he would modestly reply, ‘Whosoever betrays by taking the name of God, I am ready to be deceived for His sake’.³⁵³ He invested a great part of his wealth and energies to make efforts to groom, train and educate them. Amongst his liberated slaves, there are names of famous personalities, such as Nāfi‘³⁵⁴ (d. 726/108) and ‘Abd Allāh b. Dīnār³⁵⁵ (d. 745/127), etc.³⁵⁶ Nāfi‘ turned out to be a key resource who later became a famous teacher (see subchapter 6.1.3).³⁵⁷ Nāfi‘ was very dear to Ibn ‘Umar and he did not want to sell him away³⁵⁸ so much that ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far (d. 80/680) offered him ten thousand to buy Nāfi‘ but Ibn ‘Umar freed him for free.³⁵⁹ Nāfi‘ and ‘Abd Allāh b. Dīnār are examples of how Ibn ‘Umar played a role of an educator and invested his means in teaching young people around him. All this shows his constant engagement with his society and a philanthropic concern for the public at large (see also chapter six).

There are many interesting instances of kindness to slaves in life of Ibn ‘Umar that illustrate the reviving spirit of Islam. Once he intended to punish a slave for committing some mistake, upon which the slave argued, ‘Have you never committed a mistake on account of which you may be afraid of God? Ibn ‘Umar replied in affirmative. The slave retorted, ‘Verily in the name of He Who has respited you, if you could give me some respite, I shall not repeat my mistake’. He was granted remission. By chance, he repeated the same mistake, iterated the same answer, and was granted forgiveness. When he repeated it third time, he did not say anything. Ibn ‘Umar asked why he had not repeated the same words. The slave replied, ‘O Master! I’m ashamed as

³⁵² Ibid, 166.

³⁵³ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 460.

³⁵⁴ Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-‘A‘yān*, V, 367.

³⁵⁵ Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* [The Great History] (Hyderabad: Majlis Dā‘irat al-Ma‘ārif al-‘Uthmānīyah, n.a.), V, 85; al-Dhahabī, *Mīzān al-I‘tidāl*, II, 417.

³⁵⁶ There are other prominent names like Yasār, Ayman, Ku‘ayb and the like that may be verified from the books on *ḥadīth*.

³⁵⁷ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VI, 185.

³⁵⁸ al-Faswī, *al-Ma‘rifah wa al-Tārīkh*, I, 646.

³⁵⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 311.

you have forgiven me time and again, but I keep repeating my mistake'. Hearing this Ibn 'Umar started crying and said, 'I deserve to be more embarrassed before my Lord (than you are)' and freed him for the sake of God.³⁶⁰

This incident of the slave became an introspective experience for Ibn 'Umar. He perceived himself in the guilty slave standing before him as he would stand before God confessing all his sins. Likewise, in the act of forgiving the slave, he hoped to see his own forgiveness before God. Thus, this mutual relationship between himself and the slave turned out to be a spiritual experience and by repeating the incident, he felt a spiritual ecstasy and thrill. Ibn 'Umar remained in touch with his slaves even after their freedom. They used to come for consultation.³⁶¹

Orphans were another weak sector of society and Ibn 'Umar also supported them. He invested their wealth with the intention to increase it manifold and thus saving it from being wasted in the hands of those naïve minors.³⁶² Ibn 'Umar would give in the way of God what he loved the most as is reported in many *ḥadīth* and historical chronicles.³⁶³ For instance, once Ibn 'Umar thought of the verse in his heart 'You cannot win excellence in righteousness till you spend from what is endeared by you'.³⁶⁴ Upon this he freed his beloved *'umm walad* (a concubine who had birthed his children) saying to himself that nothing is closer to my heart than Rumaytha. He not only freed her but married her to Nāfi'.³⁶⁵

After the Prophet's demise, it was Ibn 'Umar and other senior companions who brought about a visible change in the protection of rights of slaves in Arab society. For example, the Arabs looked down upon the progeny from concubines, but some companions trained and groomed their children from concubines and later those very children outperformed in different fields and won distinction. This also changed the social standing regarding the concubine's

³⁶⁰ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, XIII, 205.

³⁶¹ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 482.

³⁶² Ibid; 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Ṣifat al-Ṣafwah* [Attributes of Mystics] (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 2000), I, 571.

³⁶³ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 15, 166; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *al-Durr al-Manthūr fī al-Tafsīr bi al-Māthūr* [Scattered Pearls Regarding Scripture-Based-Exegesis] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.a.), II, 50; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-'A'yān*, III, 30.

³⁶⁴ al-Qur'ān, 'Āl 'Imrān 3: 92.

³⁶⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 460.

children.³⁶⁶ Ibn ‘Umar’s son Sālim was amongst such personalities. Ibn ‘Umar was so fond of Sālim that his other children sometimes complained. His typical reply was the couplet ‘Sālim is dear to me like the skin between the two eyes above the nose (forehead) i.e., very dear to him.’³⁶⁷ His fondness for Sālim was natural as the qualities that later won him repute must have surfaced in his childhood (see subchapter 6.1.3).

Ibn ‘Umar also made efforts to empower women and made sure that they exercised their rights as bestowed upon them by Islam. When he became old and his sons won maturity, the tribal mindset resurfaced in society and the social life was narrowed down for women. In those times, he advised his sons that the Prophet had urged not to stop womenfolk from coming to the mosque. But his sons refused to do so.³⁶⁸ He retorted angrily that he had conveyed them saying of the Prophet and yet they did not budge in their stance. Likely, it was for the sake of women empowerment that he took his daughter Zaynab along with him to the expeditions in Africa as has been mentioned earlier.³⁶⁹

Besides there are traditions reported from him regarding animals’ rights. Ibn ‘Umar chanced to see a group of young men who had tied a hen and started shooting at it. Seeing this, he said that the Prophet had cursed such people who treat animals with cruelty.³⁷⁰ This incident exhibits that Ibn ‘Umar never neglected any strata of society, even watering the trees and conserving the animals. He was a well-trained Muslim individual who internalized the values he had learnt primarily from the Prophet and later from his father and other senior companions.

2.6 Scholarship

Ibn ‘Umar possessed a knack for learning and was conferred the privilege of being groomed and taught by the Prophet himself. He had seen the exemplary conduct of the close companions (*ṣaḥāba*). Besides he was raised in the hands of a father who was a staunch Muslim and a diligent follower of Islam. As an educator ‘Umar was a tough task master and sought for the

³⁶⁶ Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XX, 57; Yūsuf b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl* [Comprehensive revision of Biographical Lexicon *al-Kamāl fī Asmā’ al-Rijāl*] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1980), X, 150.

³⁶⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, VII, 89-91.

³⁶⁸ Abū Nu ‘aym, *Ma’rifat al-Ṣaḥābah*, III, 1714, no. 4323.

³⁶⁹ al-Juwaynī, “Shahīrāt Tūnus”.

³⁷⁰ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *Talqīh Fuhūm Ahl al-Athar fī ‘Uyūn al-Tārīkh wa al-Siyar* [The Clarification of the Understandings of Historians on the Sources of History and the *Siyar*] (Beirut: Dār al-Arqam b. Arqam, 1997), 435.

strictest adherence to the teachings of Islam. Ibn ‘Umar’s learned disposition and excellence in conduct ³⁷¹ is acknowledged by the historical sources. More importantly, ‘Umar’s ascension to caliphate converted their home into a busy secretariat where strategies of foreign policies were made to deal with the world outside Arabia. This endowed an expansive and accommodating mindset in Ibn ‘Umar. He was considered as an authority on *ḥajj* affairs ³⁷² and was the second most prolific narrator of *ḥadīth* ³⁷³, a revered spiritual leader of Muslims of Medina after Zayd b. Thābit (d. 665/45)³⁷⁴ and a dignified member of the council for the appointment of caliph.³⁷⁵ Most of all, he was known for his piety and wisdom. In short, he was an iconic figure in the then society of Medina.

An important aspect of Ibn ‘Umar’s life was his scholarly disposition. He was so fond of learning that he counted ‘awareness of ignorance’ as a kind of knowledge.³⁷⁶ His father ‘Umar was an educated person, amongst the few literates in the time before Islam ³⁷⁷ and one of the scribes of the divine revelation.³⁷⁸ Furthermore, Ibn ‘Umar’s mainstay after the migration was at *Ṣuffa*. It was here that he received his early education. It is likely that Ibn ‘Umar availed the opportunity of learning from those prisoners of Badr who could not buy freedom. Whatsoever, he was a literate man and his written correspondence with the caliphs during military expeditions verifies it.³⁷⁹ It is also reported that he kept a record of *ḥadīths* in writing ³⁸⁰ that he would use before preaching.³⁸¹ His seriousness and passion for knowledge made him a leading figure of his times. I will hereby touch upon key areas of his contribution:

³⁷¹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 307.

³⁷² Ibrāhīm b. ‘Alī al-Shīrāzī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā’* [Classes of the Jurists] (Beirut: Dār al-Rā’id al-‘Arabī, 1970), 50.

³⁷³ al-Qāsimī, *Qawā’id al-Taḥdīth*, 72.

³⁷⁴ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-‘Iṣābah*, IV, 159-60.

³⁷⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 965, 967, 3700.

³⁷⁶ al-Faswī, *al-Ma’rifah wa al-Tārīkh*, III, 392

³⁷⁷ ‘Abd al-Salām Āl ‘Īsā, *Dirāsah Naqdiyyah fī Shakhṣiyyat ‘Umar b. al-Khaṭṭāb* [Critical Studies on ‘Umar's Personality] (Medina: al-Jāmi‘a al-Islāmiyya, 2002), 185.

³⁷⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Sīrah*, IV, 669.

³⁷⁹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 152; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, V, 260.

³⁸⁰ ‘Abd al-Karīm b. Muḥammad al-Qazwīnī, *al-Tadwīn fī Akhbār Qazwīn* [Record of Events in Qazwin] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 1987), III, 221.

³⁸¹ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 460.

Ibn ‘Umar had memorized the Qur’ān during the Prophet’s life ³⁸² but this was not mere rote learning. Instead, it was with deep meditation and reflection to the extent that he had spent as many as four or eight years in learning only *sūrah al-Baqara* (the Cow).³⁸³ The latest research reveals that he was able to contribute a lot to *tafsīr al-Qur’ān* (exegesis and interpretation). His method of explanation of the Qur’ānic text was in line with latest principles of *tafsīr*. His methodology was as follows: interpretation of the Qur’ān by: Qur’ānic verses, *ḥadīths*, sayings of the companions (*ṣaḥābah*), the lexicon, the Jewish traditions (*isrā’īliyyāt*) and by the independent reasoning respectively. However, he made little use of *isrā’īliyyāt*.³⁸⁴ Later, the overstocking of *isrā’īliyyāt* in the *tafsīr* literature verified that his caution and less dependence on Jewish traditions was a better mode. He would use them in such a way that they remained distinctly different.

Ibn ‘Umar was a great follower of *tafsīr bi al-māthūr* (the exegesis predominantly derived from authentic sources, such as other Qur’ānic verses, authentic traditions, or established sunnah) rather than *tafsīr bi al-ra’y* (personal novel interpretation of words). He was cautious in the latter one. It may, therefore, be seen that his contribution in the exegesis of the Qur’ān is relatively less. According to a research that only includes famous commentaries of the Qur’ān, his quotes on Qur’ānic exegesis could only reach 213 and authenticity of the quoted sayings further reduces the number. More so, these sayings are mostly related to *fiqh*.³⁸⁵ Ibn ‘Umar’s mentee Nāfi’ too acceded to this fact that he attended seminars of both Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687). Ibn ‘Abbās gave replies to all queries whereas Ibn ‘Umar answered fewer people on the spot and mostly he deferred his responses.³⁸⁶ This shows his cautious methodology not only in *fiqh* but also in the exegesis of the Qur’ān.

Apart from his personal experiences with the Prophet, Ibn ‘Umar also learned from his father and sister (Ḥafṣa) that opened opportunities to collect sayings of the Prophet on both social and private life. His longevity helped him narrate prolifically and stand second in reporting the

³⁸² Muḥammad ‘Abd al-‘Azīm al-Zurqānī, *Manāhil al-‘Ilfān fī ‘ulūm al-Qur’ān* [Springs of Wisdom in the Sciences of the Qur’ān] (Egypt: Maktabat ‘Isā al-Bābī al-Ḥalbī, n.a.), I, 242.

³⁸³ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 164; Mālik, *al-Muwatta’*, no. 695, II, 287.

³⁸⁴ Andri Nirwana An, “‘Uṣūl al-Tafsīr ‘ind ‘Abd Allah b. ‘Umar fī Tafsīr al-Qur’ān [Ibn ‘Umar Exegetical Principles]”, *Jurnal Ilmiah Peuradeun*, [S.l.], v. 2, n. 2, p. 161-190, May 2014. ISSN 2443-2067. Available at: <<https://journal.scadindependent.org/index.php/jipeuradeun/article/view/30>>. Date accessed: 23 June 2020.

³⁸⁵ al-Maymanī, *‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar*, II, 932-933.

³⁸⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 313.

highest number of prophetic traditions. The total of his narrated *ḥadīths* is 2029, 2630 and 1958 in *Musnad Aḥmad*,³⁸⁷ *Musnad Baqī b. Makhlad*³⁸⁸ and *al-Ṣiḥāḥ al-Sitta*³⁸⁹ respectively. Although these figures are less than Abū Hurayra's, still they are more significant in some respects for Ibn 'Umar's earlier conversion to Islam by fourteen years. Therefore, a large amount of transmitted material was based upon his practical experiences and not merely a narration from others. Similarly, he exercised utmost care and conducted a meticulous scrutiny in matters related to *ḥadīth* that made his reports more precious.³⁹⁰ The traditionists from the successors (*tābi'ūn*) have described him as the most cautious.³⁹¹ Imām Abū Ja'far al-Bāqir's (d. 114/733) remark upon him is a good example, '(Ibn 'Umar) was matchless in narrating *ḥadīth* exactly the same without any addition or deletion'.³⁹²

Ibn 'Umar's followed the Prophet passionately (see subchapter 2.1.5) that led to unprecedented traditions in the narration of *ḥadīths*. For example, he painstakingly tried to trace the places where the Prophet had visited and followed the deeds that he performed at those spots. Some of its detail appears in the following section (*kitāb*) of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* 'The mosques on the road to Medina and the stay points of the Prophet where he had offered his prayer'. There is a total of ten traditions in the said section and all of them have been narrated by Ibn 'Umar.³⁹³ Nāfi' and Sālim frequently visited these places and acted the same as they had witnessed Ibn 'Umar following the footsteps of the Prophet.³⁹⁴ Another pupil of Ibn 'Umar and a freed-slave, Mujāhid (d. 104/722), was very curious to visit the places mentioned in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*.³⁹⁵ He might have got this idea from Ibn 'Umar. Another famous historian and biographer of the Prophet, al-Wāqidī (d. 207/823) is also reported to have visited the sites of the expeditions (in which the Prophet himself had taken part) to see them with his own eyes.³⁹⁶ Probably, Ibn 'Umar was the pioneer in introducing the discipline of *Atlas of sīrah* (see also

³⁸⁷ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4448-6476.

³⁸⁸ al-'Irāqī, *Fath al-Mughīth*, IV, 103.

³⁸⁹ Ibid.

³⁹⁰ Veccia Vaglieri, L., "'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar"; Ṣiddīqī, *Hadīth Literature*, 20; Qalajī, *Mawsū'at Fiqh*, 21-25.

³⁹¹ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 273, IV, 144; Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, no. 4.

³⁹² al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 308.

³⁹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 483-492.

³⁹⁴ Ibid, no. 483.

³⁹⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 449-57; III, 203-39.

³⁹⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 426; Aḥmad b. 'Aī al-Khaṭīb al-Baghdādī, *Tārīkh Baghdād* [History of Baghdad] (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb al-Islāmī, 2002), IV, 5.

subchapter 3.2.3 for Ibn ‘Umar’s visit to Jerusalem).

Similarly, Ibn ‘Umar emulated the Prophet in dressing and footwear, in hairstyle and the use of dye, in oiling and the perfume he wore, in general appearance and conduct. This extreme similarity to and conformity with the Prophet’s conduct and appearance became a valuable specimen for the next generation’s *ḥadīth* scholars and biographers of the Prophet. The books aspiring to give details about the Prophet’s life got filled with Ibn ‘Umar’s incidents about physical disposition, piety, simplicity, modesty, contented demeanor as each of these attributes somehow emulated the Prophet’s conduct.³⁹⁷

Ibn ‘Umar’s probe for the veracity and accuracy, longevity of his lifespan, abstinence from political activities, dedication for scholarly endeavors and the ready attendance of keen learners around him evolved the following chains of narration as the golden and noblest of all chains: ‘Imām Mālik, from Nāfi’, from Ibn ‘Umar’ or ‘Imām Shāfi’ī from Imām Mālik, from Nāfi’, from Ibn ‘Umar’³⁹⁸ or ‘Imām Zuhri from Sālim, from (his father) Ibn ‘Umar’.³⁹⁹

It was simply not possible for any single companion to accompany the Prophet day and night. Hence whenever some incidents took place in the absence of Ibn ‘Umar, he would consult other companions for details. For instance, he inquired about the exact spot where the Prophet had offered prayer inside the Ka‘ba,⁴⁰⁰ the report about the key custodian of the Ka‘ba when he refused to unlock the door for the Prophet in the early days of Islam and the Prophet’s subsequent claim that one day the keys would be in his possession⁴⁰¹ and the like. Similarly, he would make effort to learn traditions from intelligent and serious-minded companions like Mu‘āz b. Jabal (d. 18/639) and Abū al-Dardā’ (d. 32/652).⁴⁰² Thus, in addition to the Prophet, his father and sister, Ibn ‘Umar gained knowledge from other companions. His sources included the righteous caliphs, his uncle Zayd, the Prophet’s *mu’adhdhin* (one who calls for

³⁹⁷ Veccia Vaglieri, L., “‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar”.

³⁹⁸ ‘Usāma al-Sayyid, “*Riwāyat Aḥmad ‘an al-Shāfi’ī ‘an Mālik ‘an Nāfi’ ‘an Ibn ‘Umar wa Qīmatuhā al-rafi‘ah ‘ind al-muḥaddithīn*” [Aḥmad’s Narration on the Authority of al-Shāfi’ī on the Authority of Mālik on the Authority of Nāfi’ and its Academic Importance], *Journal of the Faculty of Islamic and Arabic Studies, Alexandria College for Girls*, Vol. 7, Issue: 33, 2017, <https://bfda.journals.ekb.eg/issue_2686_4141_.html> Access on: 22/06/2020.

³⁹⁹ al-Ḥakīm b. Muḥammad al-Nisābūrī, *Ma’rifat ‘Ulūm al-Ḥadīth* [A Study of Ḥadīth Sciences] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1977), 54; al-Sayyid, “*Riwāyat Aḥmad ‘an al-Shāfi’ī*”.

⁴⁰⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 504.

⁴⁰¹ Ibid, no. 468; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1329; ‘Abd Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, no. 9064.

⁴⁰² al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, III, 403.

prayer) Bilāl, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd, ‘Āmir b. Rabī‘a (d. 36/656), Abū Lubāba (d. 36/656?), Ṣhayb b. Sinān (d. 38/658), Zayd b. Thābit, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ (d. 55/674), Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī, Rāfi‘ b. Khadij (d. 74/693), ‘Ā’isha and others.⁴⁰³

Ibn ‘Umar has a long list of pupils and books on *ḥadīth* narrators count the number in hundreds.⁴⁰⁴ Usāma al-Sayyid has recorded as many as 740 such names in 28 pages.⁴⁰⁵ Apart from individual teaching, Ibn ‘Umar had a seminary of scholars whom he used to educate.⁴⁰⁶ Often, he was accompanied by his students in journeys. His pupils intended to serve him but on the contrary, Ibn ‘Umar served them.⁴⁰⁷ Once Mujāhid accompanied him on a journey. When Mujāhid was about to ride on the saddle of his horse, Ibn ‘Umar held stirrup for him and arranged his clothes. Such caressing gestures by a mentor who was a *ṣahābī*, the nobility of the Quraysh and son of the then caliph would have obviously discomfited a learner who was merely a freed slave. Upon his reaction, Ibn ‘Umar replied ‘You are too tight hearted a man’.⁴⁰⁸

Many of Ibn ‘Umar’s students won proficiency within his lifetime. He would attend their scholarly gatherings to oversee and encouraged them. Once he passed by al-Sha‘bī (d. 103/723)’s gathering and heard him narrating the biography of the Prophet. Seeing this, Ibn ‘Umar commented ‘He is narrating as if he himself was present amongst us when these incidents took place’.⁴⁰⁹ Once he said about Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94/715): ‘He is one of the learned jurists’.⁴¹⁰ Ibn ‘Umar would also correct their mistakes. One day, he heard ‘Ubayd b. ‘Umayr (d. 73/692) narrating a tradition of the Prophet in these words: “The hypocrite is like a ewe which goes to and fro between two flocks. When the ewe turns to the first (flock), they butt it and when to the other, they butt it too”.⁴¹¹ Hearing this, Ibn ‘Umar said that the tradition was not like that and narrated the tradition in these words: “The hypocrite is like a ewe which goes to and fro between two flocks; turning at one time to the one and at another time to the other

⁴⁰³ al-Mizzī, *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*, XV, 332-338; Ibn Ḥajar, *Tahzīb al-Tahzīb*, V, 328-330.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁰⁵ al-Maymanī, *‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar*, I, 467-494.

⁴⁰⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, IX, 480.

⁴⁰⁷ Ibid, VII, 237.

⁴⁰⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 253.

⁴⁰⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, VII, 126.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid, VI, 372.

⁴¹¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4872.

(surprised which flock should it follow)".⁴¹² He also added, "If I had not heard it from the Prophet, I would not have corrected you".⁴¹³

When the young generation was able to take up responsibility, Ibn 'Umar would direct people seeking guidance towards these young scholars as for instance he said so about 'Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ (d. 114/732): 'Why do you people pool together your inquiries for me while 'Aṭā' is present amongst you?!'.⁴¹⁴ Ibn 'Umar was very fond of preaching and counseling. He would often attend the seminary of his disciple, 'Ubayd b. 'Umayr and would cry so much so that his beard would get wet.⁴¹⁵ This shows not only his piety but also his modesty (see also subchapter 4.2.2 for Ibn 'Umar's deep understanding of *ḥadīth*).

Ibn 'Umar's scholarly disposition also lay in the Islamic Jurisprudence (*fiqh*). He was one of those Islamic jurists who would confer edicts regularly in great number.⁴¹⁶ However, in presence of senior companions especially the righteous caliphs in the early phase of Islam, it was not held appropriate that a junior and a younger companion like Ibn 'Umar should confer decrees. His meritorious talents, therefore, came to the fore when senior lot of companions gradually passed away. There appears a critical opinion about him: 'He had excellence in *ḥadīth* but not in jurisprudence (*fiqh*)'.⁴¹⁷ The basis of this opinion seems to be the rift between 'Irāqī and Medinan jurists and professional jealousy. This comment has come from the 'Irāqī school about Ibn 'Umar who belonged to the Medinan school. The said opinion might have been a result of poor familiarity with his high standing in *fiqh*. Ibn 'Umar was so passionately devoted to the Prophet that he emulated him even in non-religious affairs like his outward demeanor, dress code, food, etc. But this strict keeping was limited to him personally or he explained it upon inquiry without any instruction to follow it. His life was probably considered an edict (*fatwā*) for public and the above-mentioned comment was made. A contemporary scholar Muhammad Rawwās Qal'ajī (d. 2014) has concluded in his encyclopedic work on Ibn 'Umar's juristic thoughts that such opinion goes completely against Ibn 'Umar's jurisprudential method.

⁴¹² Ma' mar b. Rāshid al-Azdī, *al-Jāmi'* [A Comprehensive Collection of Ḥadīth] (Pakistan: al-Majlis al-'Ilmī, 1983), no. 20934; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2784; al-Nasā'ī, *al-Sunan*, no. 5037.

⁴¹³ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4872.

⁴¹⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 337.

⁴¹⁵ *Ibid*, IX, 9.

⁴¹⁶ 'Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazm, *al-'Iḥkām fī 'Uṣūl al-'Aḥkām* [Accuracy in the Principles of Legal Rulings] (Beirut: Dār al-Āfāq, n.a.), IV, 176.

⁴¹⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 285.

There are only a few minor issues that remain unappeasable at Ibn ‘Umar but it is so with all the eminent scholars.⁴¹⁸(For Ibn ‘Umar’s impact on Malikī school, see subchapter 3.2.2.)

An important subject of Islamic jurisprudence is *ḥajj* that Ibn ‘Umar performed regularly.⁴¹⁹ As per the Arab tradition or imitating an action of the Prophet, he once draped Ka‘ba with a cloth.⁴²⁰ His great expertise in *ḥajj* affairs brought him great fame so much so that people considered him one of the most knowledgeable person in this field.⁴²¹ *Ḥajj* held great importance for Arabs in general but particularly for the Quraysh as it was this institution that had won them religious authority and later political supremacy. Certainly, *ḥajj* was (and is) very much an international event wherein key personalities from the vast Islamic caliphate stretching from East to West would gather in Mecca and thus offered an opportunity of learning and acquaintance with the world around. Therefore, Ibn ‘Umar would stay here for months every year and become the focus of people’s attention. After the Rashidun caliphs, even the Muslim rulers would not miss an opportunity of learning from him. For instance, once Mu‘āwiya went into the Ka‘ba. He called for Ibn ‘Umar and inquired about the place where the Prophet had offered his prayer inside.⁴²²

Ibn ‘Umar spent the first two decades of his 84-year long life in the companionship of the Prophet, the next three decades under the righteous caliphs and the following three decades in the Umayyad dynasty. Similarly, his whole life was spent amongst the prominent religious and political personalities; therefore, he had closely seen through the early Islamic history. A well-acclaimed scholar of *ḥadīth*, *sīrah* and Islamic history, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī said the same in other words: ‘There is simply no substitute of Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion as he lived for 60 years in Medina after the Prophet’s demise, and nothing lay concealed from him during this period’ (see subchapter 6.1.3 for Ibn ‘Umar’s influence upon Ibn Shihāb).⁴²³ Thus, along with the above-cited disciplines, Ibn ‘Umar was a key resource person of the Arab history before Islam, *sīrah* and Islamic history especially the period of the righteous caliphs. Some key historical incidents

⁴¹⁸ Qalajī, *Mawsū‘at Fiqh*, 27-29.

⁴¹⁹ Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, IV, 160.

⁴²⁰ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad al-Fāsī, *Shifā’ al-Gharām bi Akhbār al-Balad al-Ḥarām* [Remedy for the Passion for the History of the Sacred City] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2000), I, 165.

⁴²¹ al-Shīrāzī, *Ṭabaqāt al-Fuqahā’*, 50.

⁴²² Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 5449; Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Azraqī, *Akhbār Makkah* [Book of Reports about Mecca] (Beirut: Dār al-Andalus, n.a.), I, 271.

⁴²³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 8.

prior to Islam like ‘Amr b. Nufayl’s quest for true religion⁴²⁴ and the detail of the personalities holding key civic positions in the city state of Mecca were reported by him.⁴²⁵ There is a long list of the *sīrah* incidents from the early Meccan life like the praying of the Prophet for conversion of the better of the two persons named ‘Umar and through him to render strength to Islam,⁴²⁶ his father, ‘Umar’s conversion to Islam,⁴²⁷ its causes and subsequent impact,⁴²⁸ the Prophet’s call to Islam in Mecca, his preaching to ‘Utba b. Rabī‘a and its effect,⁴²⁹ an account of ‘Umar’s meeting with a *kāhin* (foreteller),⁴³⁰ a few Qur’ānic verses about Abū Ṭālib⁴³¹ and his couplet about the Prophet,⁴³² the incident of splitting of the moon (*shaqq al-qamar*),⁴³³ Ibn ‘Umar’s migration to Medina along with his parents and other Muslims like ‘Ayyāsh, Abū Jahl’s taking ‘Ayyāsh back to Mecca and imprisonment,⁴³⁴ Ibn ‘Umar’s early days in Medina,⁴³⁵ the incidents after migration,⁴³⁶ Jews’ referring to the Prophet to decide a case of adultery,⁴³⁷ etc., the miracles of the Prophet,⁴³⁸ his correspondences⁴³⁹ and dreams,⁴⁴⁰ military expeditions (with or without the presence) of the Prophet, the Ḥudaybiya pact and the pledge of the tree (see subchapter 2.1.3 for more details), the commandership of Zayd b. Ḥāritha and ‘Usāma b. Zayd,⁴⁴¹ nullification of treaty of Ḥudaybiya and the efforts of the Quraysh to renew the agreement, the conquest of Mecca, the poetry of Ḥassān b. Thābit, the destruction of idols

⁴²⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, I, 86.

⁴²⁵ al-Fāsī, *Shifā’ al-gharam*, II, 99.

⁴²⁶ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 3681.

⁴²⁷ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, 615.

⁴²⁸ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3865; Ibn Ḥanbal, *fadā’il al-ṣaḥābah*, I, 282; Ibn Ishāq, *al-Sīra*, 184-185.

⁴²⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, I, 159.

⁴³⁰ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3866.

⁴³¹ Muḥammad b. Ibrāhīm Ibn al-Muqri’, *al-Mu’jam* [Dictionary of Ibn al-Muqri’ Teachers] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1998), no. 942.

⁴³² *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1008.

⁴³³ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-A’rābī, *al-Mu’jam* [The Dictionary of Ibn al-A’rābī on *Ḥadīth*] (Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1992), no. 1772.

⁴³⁴ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, I, 622.

⁴³⁵ Ibid.

⁴³⁶ Ibid.

⁴³⁷ Ibid, I, 348-350.

⁴³⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI, 84, 143.

⁴³⁹ Ibid, V, 372

⁴⁴⁰ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2265, 2271, 6991, 6999, 7006-07, 7015-16, 7019-20.

⁴⁴¹ ‘Alī Ibn al-Ja’d, *al-Musnad* [The Chain-Supported] (Beirut: Mu’assasat Nādir, 1990), no. 2898.

in the Ka‘ba, the keys of the Ka‘ba and the Prophet’s prayer inside it etc. In short, almost about every incident he has narrated traditions.⁴⁴² As has been mentioned earlier, Ibn ‘Umar’s dressing and lifestyle were itself an emulation of the Prophet’s demeanor and conduct and a live teaching model of *sīrah*. There have been some uncommon traditions of the Prophet by him like ‘The Prophet had constructed *minbar* (platform) upon gaining weight’⁴⁴³ or that ‘Once he was stung by a scorpion’.⁴⁴⁴

Likewise, the historical incidents of the Rashidun caliphate and first half of the Umayyad dynasty remained the focal point of Ibn ‘Umar’s attention especially the civil wars. His thorough understanding of *fitan* made him known as the scholar of civil strife (*kāna min fuqahā’ al-aḥdāth*).⁴⁴⁵ He had keen interest in the historical incidents, and he was able to provide connections between different historical happenings. For example, twice he made reference to Ḥudaybiya in 68/688 and 73/693 when he was abstained to join *ḥajj* due to fighting (see subchapter 5.2.3.1).⁴⁴⁶ Similarly, he took the revolt of Medina and consequently the Ḥarra incident as an outcome of ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom (see subchapter 4.2.3).⁴⁴⁷ This shows his methodology in the history of connecting the past with the present.

Ibn ‘Umar’s distinction also lay in his spiritual ardour right in the prime of his youth as is revealed by an incident reported in numerous historical books. Once a group of Qurayshī youngsters were present around Ka‘ba. Each one made an earnest prayer for himself. Some yearned for power and pelf, others sought for women of high nobility in marriage and some others prayed for excellence in knowledge. Ibn ‘Umar in his turn implored for peace, mercy, and heaven.⁴⁴⁸ In short, the long list of his teachers and students, his scholarly activities and academic output testify that he considered investment in education a central factor of social change.

⁴⁴² al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, I, 172-76, 203, 211, 233, 314-315, 344, 352, 384, 425, II, 195; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, III, 262-263, IV, 55, 88, 96, 134, 146, 219, 226.

⁴⁴³ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn al-Ḍiyā’, *Tārīkh Makkah al-Musharrafah wa al-Masjid al-Ḥarām wa al-Madīnah al-Sharīfah wa al-Qabr al-Sharīf* [History of the city of Mecca, Ḥaram Mosque, the City of Medina and the Prophet’s Mosque] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyya, 2004), 274.

⁴⁴⁴ al-Qazwīnī, *al-Tadwīn*, III, 339.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 373.

⁴⁴⁶ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1708; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, V, 143-144.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 242.

⁴⁴⁸ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VI, 135; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-Abbār, *Kitāb al-Ḥullah al-Siyarā’* [Book of the Embroidered Tunic] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘ārif, 1985), I, 31; *Ibid*, VIII, 351.

Conclusion

A lot of research in many vernaculars like Arabic, Urdu, Turkish, Persian, etc., has been carried out on Ibn ‘Umar’s life and scholarly contribution. However, fresh aspects of his personality come to the fore when a comparison of his life events is drawn in periods before and during *fitan*. For example, Ibn ‘Umar had embraced Islam in his childhood along with his father and it was a time of religious suppression. After his migration to Medina, the Qur’ānic verses revealed then granted permission to the Muslims to fight against the religious oppression. Later when some Muslims misused these same verses as justification of their political battles, Ibn ‘Umar criticized them and elaborated their real meaning.

The precious moments spent with the Prophet under the shelter of the Prophet’s Mosque had far-reaching impact on his personality. The dream that he had during those years also held great significance which hints at his positive role during the *fitan* civil wars. His participation in the Ḥudaybiya pact at the age of seventeen, its impact on his personality and selfless efforts to secure peace during unrest have been related too.

Likewise, aspects of his personality like a unique blend of resistance and harmony in his personality are revealed on the occasion of the expedition of Banū Jadhīma (8/630) and the battles of *ridda*. His stance of ‘a balance between resistance against oppression and not to forsake overall harmony at any cost’ during these battles are enough to substantiate his viewpoint during the *fitan* wars. His early life experiences determined his stance in *fitan*. For example, before the battles of *ridda* took place, the then Caliph Abū Bakr gathered the companions in Medina. Later Ibn ‘Umar suggested the same to Caliph ‘Alī i.e., gather the people of Medina and consult them.

Caliph ‘Umar’s holding his children especially Ibn ‘Umar accountable in his reign inculcated self-accountability in his personality. His father’s keeping him away from government posts and taking him out of the contest for caliphate while on his deathbed developed superior moral attributes in Ibn ‘Umar. Owing to these reasons, I argue that Ibn ‘Umar had gained a discerning eye to view the *fitan* battles more objectively (which will be discussed in chapters three-five). Additionally, he had an insightful understanding of Islamic disciplines of knowledge which shaped his viewpoint. Owing to this visionary stance, he is known as the scholar of civil strife and conflict.

3. Chapter Three: Ibn ‘Umar’s Approach to Politics during the Reigns of Caliphs ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī and Imām Ḥasan (23/644 - 41/661)

This chapter aims to focus the life and activities of Ibn ‘Umar during the first wave of *fitan* wars. This wave started in the last years of Caliph ‘Uthmān’s reign, reached its peak during ‘Alī’s caliphate and died away by the end of the brief caliphate of Imām Ḥasan. I will give a short introduction to these caliphates along with a review of various *fitan* incidents to furnish contextual information. Since this chapter discusses Ibn ‘Umar’s life during the years of unrest, hence his reaction to each incident is especially focused.

The civil wars (*fitan*) revolve around the issue of the caliphate that has affected almost everything including history, politics, beliefs, law, and theology. Similarly, a great part of available literature on *fitan* has suffered tribal, national, religious, and sectarian prejudice and exaggeration. Therefore, an effort has also been made to lay focus on the established events alone. Upon a closer analysis of the accounts of *fitan*, there is less difference in their narration of happening and more disagreement on the aims and intentions behind them. For instance, Imām Ḥusayn’s martyrdom at the hands of armed troops of the Umayyad ruler, Yazīd is an established fact. Yet, there is a dispute between the Sunnites and the Shiites over Yazīd’s will and intention. The same goes true for most of such historical incidents. Therefore, being aware of some theological implications of re-reading of these historical events, an attempt is made to avoid heavily loaded theological inferences.

This chapter has four arguments concerning the peace-oriented efforts made by Ibn ‘Umar. Firstly, he was committed to non-violence and peaceful dialogue for his upbringing by the Prophet himself and by other senior companions (like his father). Secondly, Ibn ‘Umar’s farsightedness enabled him to predict the consequences through the events. Thirdly, Ibn ‘Umar remained unheard in the early period of *fitan* due to his young age, in a predominantly tribal society wherein elders had louder voice than young people. Fourth, his efforts and words were subconsciously leaving an impression upon some people, therefore, the importance of his stance gradually developed in tune with his age.

3.1 The Reign of ‘Uthmān

The initial six years of ‘Uthmān’s reign were peaceful, however, the measures taken during this period had a notable impact on major incidents of civil unrest of the latter half of his era. Thus, his reign shall be studied from beginning to end in four sub-sections: Section one will discuss

transfer of power to ‘Uthmān. Section two will analyze him as caliph and difference of his caliphate from predecessors. Section three and four will consecutively pursue the incidents of his decline and surging revolt against him in a way that it may develop an understanding of *fitan* events. However, Ibn ‘Umar’s activities and views for peace and social harmony will remain pivotal in this subchapter.

3.1.1 Election of ‘Uthmān

‘Umar got killed after a deadly attack on him in 23/644. While he lay on his deathbed, many people desired that he should name his successor like Abū Bakr to avert clashes and smooth transfer of power.⁴⁴⁹ Some traditions quote that he was advised to entrust caliphate to his son, ‘Abd Allāh, but mere suggestion infuriated him.⁴⁵⁰ It is possible that he might have considered consigning caliphate at some point, but some dream or intuitive experience barred him.⁴⁵¹

Probably a political strategy for peaceful transition of power was under ‘Umar’s consideration, but sudden death did not allow him to frame SOPs (Standard Operational procedure). The naming of a 6-member committee along with a counselor and a religious leader may be a result of this subconscious thought-stream.⁴⁵² Ibn ‘Umar had a detailed discussion on this issue with his sister Ḥafṣa who informed him that their father would not name his successor. Since the issue was sensitive and a wrong decision could lead to conflict in *ummah*, it disturbed Ibn ‘Umar. He decided to discuss the matter with his father and presented the whole scenario with an analogy that if any of his herdsmen left the cattle unattended to see ‘Umar, would he not then waste his livestock. Upon this, ‘Umar contemplated for a while and replied: ‘Allāh shall never let his *dīn* (religion) go wasted. If I name a successor, in that case a person better than me (i.e., Abū Bakr) has already done so and if I do otherwise, then a person far superior to me (i.e., the Prophet) has done like that’.⁴⁵³ Theologically speaking, ‘Umar preferred the best (*aḥsan*) over the better (*ḥasan*). This indicates his deep reflection and theological conviction about this issue.

It seems as if ‘Umar had already deliberated over both modes of transfer of power and had concluded that although Abū Bakr’s mode of nomination was comparatively easier and peaceful

⁴⁴⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1823.

⁴⁵⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 228.

⁴⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵² Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, *al-Fitnah al-Kubrā* [The Great Upheaval] (Cairo: Dār al-Ma‘āwif, 2002), 63.

⁴⁵³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 7218; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1823.

but devoid of the evolutionary potential present in the Prophet's mode that was inclusive, engaged and consulted multiple stakeholders at any given time. During the last moments of his life, 'Umar did utmost to resolve the issue of peaceful transfer of the caliphate permanently through establishing a council whose members not only belonged to different prominent branches of the Quraysh but were intimate companions of the Prophet too. This shows that he considered both religious and tribal pre-eminence. Probably he felt that a successful transition of power is the one that is all-inclusive in nature. These six nominees of the council were so prestigious that 'Umar addressed them while on his deathbed: 'I have no fear that people shall have disagreement over anything if you remain upright, but I am more concerned that a clash amongst you shall lead to disagreement of people at large'.⁴⁵⁴ In all probability later 'Uthmān's distance from the members of this council led to his martyrdom, and 'Alī's row with two members of this council i.e., namely al-Zubayr and Ṭalḥa caused the battle of the Camel. Consequently, the Syrian Governor, Mu'āwiya did not submit to 'Alī.

When Ibn 'Umar heard this, he understood that his father shall follow the Prophet's mode.⁴⁵⁵ 'Umar's council included the following members: 'Uthmān, 'Alī, 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa and Sa'd b. Abī Waqqāṣ).⁴⁵⁶ He named his son 'Abd Allāh as an advisor but not as a member.⁴⁵⁷ It was owing to the efforts of these members especially that of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf⁴⁵⁸ and Ibn 'Umar⁴⁵⁹ that a peaceful transition of power took place and 'Uthmān was elected as the new caliph.⁴⁶⁰

'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Awf was related to the newly elected caliph 'Uthmān and his wife, Umm Kulthūm bint 'Uqba (d. 40/660) was 'Uthmān's half-sister from mother's side.⁴⁶¹ According to some histories, 'Abd al-Raḥmān was influenced by Umm Kulthūm upon the issue of 'Uthmān's caliphate⁴⁶² but to infer such a conclusion on the basis of kinship is a tricky business. Such affiliations were present amongst all the committee members. For instance, 'Alī was father-in-

⁴⁵⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 228.

⁴⁵⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1823; Abū Dāwūd, no. 2939.

⁴⁵⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 567.

⁴⁵⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3700.

⁴⁵⁸ *Ibid*, no. 7207.

⁴⁵⁹ 'Abd Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, I, 41; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Khallāl, *al-Sunnah* [The Sunnah] (Riyadh: Dār al-Rāyah, 1989), no. 363.

⁴⁶⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 227-240.

⁴⁶¹ al-Mizzī, *Tahzīb al-Kamāl*, XXXV, 382.

⁴⁶² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 230.

law of ‘Umar. Therefore, the advisor, Ibn ‘Umar was also related to ‘Alī. Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf were not only cousins but belonged to the same tribe Banū Zuhra. Hence, most probably despite of some people’s provocative efforts, ‘Alī gave his assent to depute ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf for resolving the issue of the caliphate.⁴⁶³ There are traditions that relate when ‘Alī was told provocatively after ‘Uthmān ascension: ‘You have been deceived’, he replied in astonishment: ‘Is this a deception? (i.e., it is not a betrayal)’.⁴⁶⁴ However, some other traditions report ‘Alī’s displeasure upon the decision. Whatsoever, he showed patience and restraint.⁴⁶⁵

In this six-member committee, when the number of ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī’s supporters went even-stein, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf (with due consent from both ‘Uthmān and ‘Alī) suggested to elect caliph on the basis of popularity and thus ‘Uthmān was selected as he was more popular amongst the masses.⁴⁶⁶ A tradition narrated by Ibn ‘Umar in many *ḥadīth* collections, endorses this view, ‘While the Prophet was present amongst us, we (the companions) used to regard Abū Bakr the best, then ‘Umar and next ‘Uthmān amongst the companions’.⁴⁶⁷

3.1.2 ‘Uthmān as Caliph

‘Uthman was around seventy when he took charge and his tenure lasted for about twelve years during which numerous significant events took place.⁴⁶⁸ The foremost amongst them were: recompilation of the Qur’ān, the expansion of the two holy mosques in Mecca and Medina (Ḥaramayn) and conquest of some new states (including Armenia, Khurasān, Kirmān, Sijistān, North Africa and Cyprus). He also formed the first-ever Muslim naval fleet.

‘Uthman was preferred over ‘Umar during the initial six years for his lenience and clemency. Maybe the political predicaments of the latter six years were a consequence of his mild relenting nature and old age (he was in early eighties at that time).⁴⁶⁹ The leniency of his administration may be perceived from the fact that the same aristocracy that dared not commit any minor offence in ‘Umar’s reign, could now speak impudently before him. An example may be taken

⁴⁶³ Ibid, IV, 230-31; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, II, 443.

⁴⁶⁴ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, V, 477.

⁴⁶⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 230; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, II, 443; Muir, *The Caliphate*, 196-97.

⁴⁶⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3700; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 233; Maḥmūd Shākir, *al-Tārīkh al-Islāmī* [Islamic History] (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 2000), III, 19-22.

⁴⁶⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3655, 3697; *Abū Dawūd*, *al-Sunan*, no. 4627, 4628.

⁴⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 337-38; al-Suyūfī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’*, 123-124.

of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’ attitude during the two reigns. ‘Amr’s son had ill-treated a Coptic. On receiving the Coptic’s complaint, ‘Umar summoned both the father and the son and let the son whipped by the complainant publicly.⁴⁷⁰ However, when ‘Uthmān held ‘Amr accountable for some misdeed, he behaved disrespectfully.⁴⁷¹ Similarly, ‘Uthmān’s foster brother and his Governor of Egypt, Ibn Abī Sarḥ (d. 37/656), refused to follow some of his orders which resulted into a massive protest of hundreds of Egyptians in Medina.⁴⁷²

Although, the rebellion after the Prophet’s demise was successfully crushed in the reign of the Abū Bakr, but a few measures of ‘Umar reveal his farsightedness. He introduced a novel type of leadership in his era. He began ‘prioritizing those who had won precedence in embracing Islam for the award of public endowment’⁴⁷³ to prevent any such incidents in future. This effectively neutralized the tradition of clan-based tribal leadership.⁴⁷⁴ Under this policy, the early converts and those who had migrated from Mecca to Medina won the status of noble elites rather than tribal leadership.⁴⁷⁵ The main reason behind this preference was that all senior companions got settled in Medina along with the Prophet. After his demise, the caliphs turned towards them for consultation and making decisions, because the same companions were the key source for imparting knowledge of the Prophet’s conduct (sunnah) in various matters. Naturally, they were referees and evaluators of caliphs’ policies whether these were in cognizance with the Prophet’s conduct.⁴⁷⁶ In a nutshell, they acted like a check and balance agents. A sizable number of senior companions (both emigrants and locals) were also sent to all the key settlements of Muslim state (Basra, Kufa, ---). They acted in the same manner in new destinations and served as custodians of Islam in its original form.⁴⁷⁷ Besides delegating senior companions to different Muslim cities, ‘Umar maintained a considerable number around himself. Their presence in all provinces ensured the practical implementation of the decisions

⁴⁷⁰ al-Hindī, *Kanz al-‘Ummāl*, no. 36010; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥakam, *Futūḥ Miṣr wa al-Maghrib* [The History of the Conquest of Egypt, North Africa, and Spain] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, 1994), 195.

⁴⁷¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 255-56, 356-57.

⁴⁷² al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’*, 123-24.

⁴⁷³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 614; Fu’ād Jabalī, “A Study of the Companions of the Prophet”, 143.

⁴⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁵ Martin Hinds, “The Murder of the Caliph ‘Uthmān”, *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, Vol. 3, no. 4 (October 1972), 451.

⁴⁷⁶ Fu’ād Jabalī, “Companions of the Prophet”, 139.

⁴⁷⁷ Ibid, 139.

made by the companions in Medina.⁴⁷⁸

‘Umar seems to have a foreknowledge of the incidents that took place during the last six years of ‘Uthmān. For example, he realized that his real strength laid in the hands of the senior companions (*al-sābiqūn*) especially the early Meccan immigrants to Medina (*muhājirūn*) who had been educated and trained for long by the Prophet. Therefore, he would not allow any of these to leave Medina but for a known time-period and with due permission. This rule was exclusively for them and not for the Meccans who immigrated to Medina in a later stage.⁴⁷⁹ Similarly, he also realized that the tribe of the Quraysh must retain a moral superiority over the rest amongst Muslims, otherwise, their stature as a leading group shall become contestable and people shall disregard their pre-dominance. He took caliph as a representative of the Quraysh’s moral and religious superiority before the Muslim *ummah*. Therefore, he kept his own kith and kin away from civil services or government key positions despite their competence. His cousin, Sa‘īd b. Zayd was one of the ten senior-most companions who were blessed with the glad tidings of Paradise (*al-‘asharah al-mubashsharah*)⁴⁸⁰ and a competent person. Yet, he neither made him a member of the Council nor conferred him with any civil or military designation. Same was the case with his sons especially with Ibn ‘Umar. He treated his children more sternly than ordinary Muslims.⁴⁸¹ Besides, ‘Umar was a determined personality whose household resources were scanty and correlated with the conditions of ordinary people of that time.

After ‘Umar, there remained no restriction on the early Meccan immigrants (*muhājirūn*) to keep permanent residence in Medina. Consequently, the said influential stronghold weakened over the time.⁴⁸² Likewise, the stern code of conduct that ‘Umar followed with his people and family was no longer prevalent as ‘Uthmān was a clement person by nature.⁴⁸³ Also since ‘Uthmān’s household had remained affluent, therefore his housekeeping was not in harmony with the hard times of the *ummah*.⁴⁸⁴ Furthermore, during the second half of his reign, ‘Uthmān was too aged

⁴⁷⁸ Ibid, 247-248.

⁴⁷⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 396-397.

⁴⁸⁰ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 3747; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 167.

⁴⁸¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 202.

⁴⁸² Ibid, 397-398; Fu‘ād Jabalī, “Companions of the Prophet”, 247-48.

⁴⁸³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 284-285; al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 194-196; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, II, 528-529.

⁴⁸⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 400-401.

and fragile to fulfill all the duties of the caliphate. Some people deemed authority and governance practically in the hands of the Umayyads, his tribesmen. Another setback in this regard was probably the absence of any legislative policy to replace a fragile caliph as it was present in case of his death. Thus, the tragedy of assassination of ‘Uthmān took place.

During the caliphate of ‘Uthmān (23/644 – 35/656), Ibn ‘Umar got comparatively less engaged in the military campaigns. His participation is mentioned in the famous conquests of Africa under Ibn Abī Sarḥ known as the *jaysh al-‘Abādila* i.e., army of the three ‘Abd Allāhs: ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (d. 65/684).⁴⁸⁵ Ibn ‘Umar was about 37 in the year 27/647 and perhaps he took his daughter Zaynab with him in this expedition.⁴⁸⁶ He also took part in the expeditions of Jurjān and Tabaristān under the leadership of Sa‘īd b. al-‘Āṣ (d. 59/679) along with other eminent ⁴⁸⁷ companions.⁴⁸⁸

Ibn ‘Umar is not found to hold any office, rank, or commandant neither in the lifetime of the Prophet nor in the reigns of Abū Bakr and ‘Umar. ‘Uthmān desired and insisted to appoint him a judge but he refused to accept.⁴⁸⁹ Declining a post in the reign of ‘Uthmān reveals that it was purely by choice. He had probably decided to serve the *ummah* in the academic and spiritual fields as involvement in politics wears a person out easily and would not leave him with enough energy, time and means.

3.1.3 Opposition to ‘Uthmān’s Policies

Though Ibn ‘Umar did not hold any government position, still he remained by the side of ‘Uthmān. He was one of his few confidantes⁴⁹⁰ who were sent to take view of the nationwide deteriorating political situation. By the time ‘Uthmān grew old and frail, he was further mellowed down or overruled by some of his subordinates.⁴⁹¹ It caused him to take a number of

⁴⁸⁵ *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 159-160; Aḥmad al-Nuwayrī, *Nihāyat al-Arab fī Funūn al-Adab* [The Aim of the Intelligent in the Art of Letters] (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmiyya, 2002), XXIV, 7-8; Muhammad Amān al-Jāmī, *al-Islām fī Ifrīqiyyā ‘Abr al-Tārīkh* [History of Islam in Africa] (Medina: Islamic University, 1984), 19.

⁴⁸⁶ al-Juwaynī, “Shahīrāt Tūnus”.

⁴⁸⁷ For example, Ḥudhayfa b. Yamān, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, Imām Ḥasan and Ḥusayn, ‘Ubayd Allāh b. ‘Umar, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far and many others [Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 269-270].

⁴⁸⁸ *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 163-164; Ibid, IV, 269-270.

⁴⁸⁹ ‘Abd al-Ḥumayd al-Kassī, *al-Muntakhab min Musnad ‘Abd b. Ḥumayd* [A Selection from *Musnad ‘Abd b. Ḥumayd*] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Sunnah, 1988), no. 48; al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 1322.

⁴⁹⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 341.

⁴⁹¹ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, V, 477.

unpopular decisions like the ill-treatment with ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd and ‘Ammār b. Yāsir, the exile of Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī many times, etc., that brought some distance between him and the senior companions. This void was filled mostly by his tribesmen or other late converts. For example, before his martyrdom, ‘Uthmān called a meeting to discuss the prevailing situation with Ibn Abī Sarḥ (Governor of Egypt), Mu‘āwiya (Governor of Damascus) and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Āmir, d. 59/679 (Governor of Basra) alongside ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ and Sa‘īd b. al-‘Āṣ. However, none of them could suggest a viable solution that could improve the situation.

The case of Abū Dharr has considerable significance in relation to Ibn ‘Umar. In the early days of Islamic history, the Muslim community in Mecca faced severe economic challenges. Later, when these people abandoned all their possessions and migrated to Medina, their plight grew worse so much so that the people of Medina had to shoulder the financial burden of these migrants. ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar faced the same hardships (see subchapter 2.1.2).⁴⁹² In those times of scarcity, people were encouraged to extend monetary assistance to fellow Muslims with whatever lay excess. Even Qur’ānic injunctions admonish hoarding of wealth in the times of scarcity. However, later when the Medinan society became rich and generally people did not face paucity of economic resources then these restrictions were uplifted and except for the obligatory charity (*zakāt*) people were given a free hand to spend, hoard or donate. Since the leading companions had become used to tough life, they carried on with the same practice even after the commandment of obligatory *zakāt* was revealed. The obligatory charity (*zakāt*) was acceptable for the newly converted Muslims but endowing all their excess money to help the impoverished was a hard practice and additionally their upbringing was not such that they could do this readily. However, some gained more wealth, and their activities may be deemed as individual’ acts in society. There rose a few affluent landlords during ‘Umar’s reign, but the practice of strict accountability and check did not allow them to opt for a luxurious lifestyle.

In ‘Uthmān’s era a sizable number of the newly converted tribal elders were designated at key posts. Besides, the accountability process did not remain as exacting as it was in ‘Umar’s reign with the consequence that these affluent notables could not become role models of staunch simplicity. Thus, ‘Uthmān was censured on account of these big-wigs and Abū Dharr al-Ghifārī was the topmost to condemn the elite in the light of austere teachings of the Qur’ān and sunnah

⁴⁹² *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4243.

that had a great impact on people.⁴⁹³ Consequently, Abū Dharr had to go in exile several times during ‘Uthmān’s reign. Once when Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion was sought about what Abū Dharr decried, his reply was thus, ‘The injunctions that revoke hoarding money were revealed before the obligatory *zakāt* (charity)’.⁴⁹⁴ Ibn ‘Umar generally practiced austerity like the senior companions of the Prophet and he would endow mostly whatever was extra. However, he knew that many wealthy companions had helped the Prophet with their material provisions and resources. It seems likely that he was aware of the fact that commerce, trade, industry and economic progress are not possible without the presence of an affluent class in Muslim society. His opinion on the issue was realistic that made distinction between personal and communal life without disregarding social realities. It looks Ibn ‘Umar preferred social harmony and deemed that insistence on Abū Dharr’s idealistic opinion may cause disturbance.

3.1.4 Revolt against ‘Uthmān

Ibn Shabbah mentions an important anecdote which shows Ibn ‘Umar’s peacebuilding activism during the last days of ‘Uthmān. Once he stopped a person in the market who desired assassination of the caliph. Ibn ‘Umar reprimanded him saying that people like him wished to turn the caliphate into the Roman political system (Hiracluiism or *hiraqliyyah*) so as to kill a ruler whenever one may wish for it.⁴⁹⁵ It also uncovers Ibn ‘Umar’s wisdom and knowledge of how a caliphate is different from a kingdom and how the rights of a caliph differ from that of a king. In another incident, Ibn ‘Umar addressed people saying, ‘You criticize ‘Uthmān for such deeds that if ‘Umar had done, you would not have reprovved him’.⁴⁹⁶ He is quoted to have said in another anecdote:

In ‘Uthmān’s caliphate, a person came to me and started talking about him. He said to me during conversation that I should also condemn ‘Uthmān. This person had a long discussion... When he finished talking, I (instead disparaging ‘Uthmān) told him: ‘During the lifetime of the Prophet, we used to say that after the Prophet, Abū Bakr, then ‘Umar and then ‘Uthmān are exalted amongst the *ummah*. By God! We have not found him

⁴⁹³ Ibid, no. 1404; Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, no. 1406, 4660; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḡ*, no. 10696, 30610; Aḡmad b. ‘Amr al-Bazzār, *al-Baḡr al-Zakḡkḡār* [The Immense Ocean] (Medina: Maktabat al-‘Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam, 1988-2009), no. 3895.

⁴⁹⁴ *Ṣaḡīḡ al-Bukḡārī*, no. 1404; Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, no. 1787.

⁴⁹⁵ Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīḡ al-Madīnah*, IV, 1175.

⁴⁹⁶ Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḡ*, no. 32047; ‘Abd Allah b. Muḡammad al-Fākihī, *al-Fawā‘id* [The Advantages – A Ḥadīḡ Collection] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1998), no. 200.

guilty of murder of any innocent. Neither has he committed any prime sins (that may necessitate his murder). But this wealth is the (main) issue. Had you been given the money, you would have been happy and if he gave it to any of his kinsman, you would get upset. You wish to be like the Romans and Iranians who did not spare any chief that they disapprove but get him killed'.⁴⁹⁷ (Some traditions report that then) tears welled in his eyes and he said, 'O Allāh! We do not want it'.⁴⁹⁸

If these narrations were not pious fiction, they reveal the discussions being held in Medina that criticized 'Uthmān. Ibn 'Umar tackled them in two ways. One, he reported it to the Caliph quietly and urged him to give away the due rights of the protesters (as shall be discussed later). Besides, he spoke favorably in support of the Caliph to procure a peaceful atmosphere and better cohesion in society. Two, he tried to convince people in the light of history that if 'Umar had committed the same as was done by 'Uthmān, no one would have raised a finger (in objection). In other words, he reproved people for taking undue advantage of 'Uthmān's clemency. He added thus that the bone of contention is wealth and ranks. Whoever received endowments was happy and those who did not get anything are raising a storm in the teacup. Then being overwhelmed with his emotions, Ibn 'Umar started crying and raised his hands in prayer 'O God! I do not desire power and pelf'.⁴⁹⁹

Similarly, when hundreds of Egyptians gathered in Medina to protest against Ibn Abī Sarḥ, Ibn 'Umar advised 'Uthmān to make use of 'Alī's influence to make dialogue with the rebels which eventually improved the situation for the time being.⁵⁰⁰ Unfortunately, an accident aggravated the situation and led to 'Uthmān's martyrdom.⁵⁰¹ 'Uthmān had nominated and sent away Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr as governor of Egypt in presence of numerous companions who replaced Ibn Abī Ṣarḥ (as per the wish of the Egyptians). While they were on their way, they happened to pass a disturbed and confused person whom they took into custody on suspicion. Upon investigation, it was found out that he was a bondsman of either the caliph or his secretary Marwān. This person was carrying a letter to Ibn Abī Ṣarḥ. The nominated Governor, Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr opened this letter in presence of many *anṣār* and *muhājirūn*

⁴⁹⁷ Aḥmad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah* [Virtues of the Companions] (Beirut: Mu'assasat al-Risālah, 1983), no. 64.

⁴⁹⁸ al-Khallāl, *al-Sunnah*, no. 546.

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁰ Ibn al-A'tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 409-10.

⁵⁰¹ al-Suyūfī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā'*, 123-24.

companions. The letter instructed to kill Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr along with other people. It further stated that Ibn Abī Ṣarḥ should keep working and not follow the instructions sent to him earlier. When this letter along with the slave reached Medina, it garnered an atmosphere of despair. Then many senior companions like ‘Alī, Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr, Sa‘d and others went to ‘Uthmān and asked whether the slave, the camel and the seal on the letter belonged to him. ‘Uthmān assented that they belonged to him, but he avowed in the name of God that neither had he written any letter, nor had he sent any slave to Egypt. Some people suspected that Marwān, the official scribe of ‘Uthmān might be the culprit and they demanded his custody for investigation. Marwān was present in ‘Uthmān’s home, but he refused the demand fearing for his life.⁵⁰² This led to a deadlock as ‘Uthmān accepted that the slave, camel, and the seal belonged to him but on the contrary denied having any information about the contents of the official letter. Furthermore, refusal to hand over the scribe made the investigation impossible. Thus, the companions who had earlier intermediated between ‘Uthmān and the protesters fell into an awkward position. They returned dejected and furious, remained in a fix and indecisive and could not come out of this dilemma for many days. However, their youthful sons guarded ‘Uthmān’s residence from the front door. The assailants (amongst whom the Egyptians were in great majority) struck from the rear side (back wall). They might have been guided by Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr who was furious at the instructions of his murder. Possibly ‘Uthmān’s residence came under attack due to Marwān’s presence inside.⁵⁰³

These Egyptians stated if ‘Uthmān was truthful, still he was no longer competent to rule over them when he was least aware of what was going on around him.⁵⁰⁴ In this critical situation, when the rebels showed their willingness to spare the life of ‘Uthmān on the condition if he stepped down, Ibn ‘Umar is reported to suggest that he should not even at the cost of his life lest people should take forceful resignation and it will pave the way for undemocratic and unjust desires of different extremist groups.⁵⁰⁵

Some traditions also refer to the religious nature of the problem. In a tradition, the Prophet intimated ‘Uthmān that God may confer him caliphate. Then if the people pressed him to

⁵⁰² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 373-75; Ibid.

⁵⁰³ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁰⁵ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allah Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-‘Awāṣim min al-Qawāṣim* [Defense Against Disaster] (Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Islamic Affairs, Dawah and Guidance, 1998), 130.

abdicate, he must not agree (for further discussion on this tradition, see subchapter 6.2.4).⁵⁰⁶ The tradition may contain some advice for ‘Uthmān to consider options other than leaving the caliphate, e.g., a neutral investigation about the letter or further legislation to ensure smooth transfer of power and the like.

Despite everything, people offered prayers in ‘Uthmān’s leadership and did not annoy him till he or those who misused his name wrote to the governors for the armed troops. When the protesters came to know, the situation worsened. He would curse people over pulpit and people would quarrel with him to the extent that once an assault left him unconscious. He was rushed to his home that was besieged and his movements were barred. The situation further aggravated after a companion, Nayyār b. ‘Ayyād al-Aslamī (d. 35/656), who was talking to ‘Uthmān from outside, was fatally hit and killed with an arrow from within. The angry mob demanded for a reprisal, the denial infuriated them and they broke into the house.⁵⁰⁷

‘Uthmān’s freed slave, Ḥumrān b. Abbān (d. 75/694) is also reported to have been amongst the troublemakers. ‘Uthman punished and exiled him many times for serious crimes and deception⁵⁰⁸ but somehow, he would manage to come back due to his penmanship. He was in close relationship with Marwān and with him he was hiding at ‘Uthmān’s house before martyrdom.⁵⁰⁹ After reconciliation, between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiyah, Ḥumrān incited the people in Kufa to swear allegiance to Imām Ḥusayn to sow discord⁵¹⁰ and pave the way for Marwān. He may have been instrumental in sending many letters to Imām Ḥusayn during Yazīd’s tenure to weaken the Sufyanids against the Marwānids. When Ḥajjāj arrested him for rioting, Marwān’s son, Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik ordered his release for close family terms with him.⁵¹¹ Since Ḥumrān also lived in different cities, it is probable that the fake letters and rumours of inciting public to revolt attributed to a notorious personality of Ibn Saba may have

⁵⁰⁶ *al-Tirmidhī, al-Sunan*, no. 3705; Ibn Māja, *al-Sunan*, no. 112.

‘Uthmān’s dream at the night of his martyrdom may also be included in the religious reasons [Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Musnad*, no. 30510].

⁵⁰⁷ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, II, 536-545.

⁵⁰⁸ Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, III, 1028-31; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XV, 172-79; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XV, 172; XXVI, 8; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 327-28;

⁵⁰⁹ Muṭahhar ibn Ṭāhir al-Maqdisī, *Kitāb al-Bad’ wa al-Tārīkh* [Book on the Beginnings and Time] (Port Said: Maktabat al-Thaqāfah al-Dīniyyah, n.d), V, 204; Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, IV, 1161

⁵¹⁰ Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūh*, IV, 296.

⁵¹¹ al-Dīnawarī, *al-Ma‘ārif*, I, 436; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XV, 177.

been his work.⁵¹²

Ibn ‘Umar acted as a mediator between the rebels and ‘Uthmān and advised him to comply with all legal demands. Likewise, he counseled the demonstrators to leave – which we call in modern terms –undemocratic behavior and warned them of the dangerous consequences. He admonished them if a grey-haired (*shaykh*) caliph was executed then people would forever walk out of peace and harmony.⁵¹³ He continued that it would lead to an eternal discord and if ever they stood together, that would merely be a physical union. He reminded people of ‘Uthmān’s past accomplishments and his prestigious status in the eyes of the Prophet.⁵¹⁴

This was the first incident of civil strife, and its consequences were not yet known. However, the way Ibn ‘Umar perceived the happenings and anticipated the future, it was almost the same what history books later reveal. He used a concise but comprehensive word “*shaykh*”⁵¹⁵ to refer to several things. It may indicate agedness as ‘Uthmān was at least 82-year-old. and his seniority called for due respect. *Shaykh* also means a leader and ‘Uthmān not only had a dignified status amongst the Quraysh, but he had served as caliph too for twelve years.

Ibn ‘Umar defended the caliph with both sword and speech like many other companions.⁵¹⁶ Some traditions cite that he took the sword of his father and came out for his defense.⁵¹⁷ Carrying father (‘Umar)’s sword on this occasion was more of a moral emblem than a weapon. This sword had played a crucial role in the early Islamic history and by operating it in ‘Uthmān’s defense Ibn ‘Umar equated it with its early use.

Since ‘Uthmān himself did not allow the use of force, Ibn ‘Umar was refrained.⁵¹⁸ Some traditions state that he was with ‘Uthmān in his last moments when the attackers took him by his collar and dragged him out.⁵¹⁹ This shows that to put an end to the unrest (*fitna*), he was

⁵¹² Wikipedia. 2021. “Fitnat Maqatal ‘Uthmān [‘Uthmān’s Assassination]”, 23/02/2022, <https://ar.wikipedia.org/wiki/مقتل_عثمان#cite_ref-55>.

⁵¹³ Al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, III, 444-47, 452-53.

⁵¹⁴ Ibid.

⁵¹⁵ Ibn Manzūr, *Lisān al-‘Arab*, III, 31 (شَيْخ); Edward William Lane, Arabic-English Lexicon, URL: <http://arabiclexicon.hawramani.com/search/%D8%B4%D9%8A%D8%AE?cat=50>

⁵¹⁶ Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 409-10.

⁵¹⁷ al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, no. 9665; al-Ṭaḥāwī, *Sharḥ Mushkil al-Aāthār*, no. 1402; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 458.

⁵¹⁸ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-‘Awāṣim*, 132-134.

⁵¹⁹ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Abū al-‘Arab, *Kitāb al-Miḥan* [The Book of Trials] (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Ulūm, 1984), I, 82.

willing to lay down his life. He was fearlessly bold in speech and remained undaunted throughout.

There is no mention in history that ‘Uthmān tried to nominate his successor in case of his death, the way he had made in favour of ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Awf for falling sick in the early days of ascension.⁵²⁰

To sum up Ibn ‘Umar’s various activities in this reign shows his repeated attempts for the restoration of peace. Initially, he acted successfully as an advisor during the transfer of power and took part in different military expeditions without accepting any position. In challenging days of the caliphate, he did his utmost to strengthen the government by making valuable suggestions to the Caliph; assessing critically the situation arising from unrest; holding conciliatory dialogues and discussions with the unhappy section of the people; acting as an intermediary in the dialogues between the rebels and the caliph and defending the caliph with speech and his arms and the like.

Ibn ‘Umar’s significant political thoughts include ‘peaceful transfer of power and political stability’ as the most important. In presence of a caliph, another caliph cannot be sworn in, and that the caliphate was distinctly different from monarchy so that any resentment or antagonism against a caliph may not lead to his death or sacking him up through any undemocratic means’.

3.2 The Reign of Caliph ‘Alī

If the last days of ‘Uthmān’s era signify the beginning of civil unrest, then ‘Alī’s five-year long reign bears central position in this regard. As Ibn ‘Umar predicted the catastrophic outcome of ‘Uthmān’s assassination, this era witnessed three battles. The subchapter has been distributed into four sections to study this era: Section one to study the conditions wherein ‘Alī took charge; section two to discuss the battle of the Camel; section three to deal with the battle of Ṣiffīn and arbitration and, in the end, section four to explore the battle of Nahrawān. However, each section ends to investigate the role of Ibn ‘Umar and his perspective of each war, his views and guidance.

3.2.1 Election as Caliph

Ibn ‘Umar was around 47 years old when ‘Uthmān was assassinated in 35/656. The situation was so tense that for many days no one braced to take charge of the caliphate. Ibn ‘Umar was

⁵²⁰ Ibn Shabbah, *Tārīkh al-Madīnah*, III, 1028-29.

one of those whom the rebels wished to give their allegiance to, but he did not accede to it.⁵²¹ He replied thus: ‘Certainly there will be a retribution for this deed (i.e., the martyrdom of Caliph). By God! Under no condition, I shall face this (as a caliph). You people seek someone else’.⁵²² Most probably Ibn ‘Umar viewed ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom from an ethical and theological perspective as it was the first theological dispute among Muslims. He appears to have known through his spiritual insight that brutal assassination of a state’s esteemed ruler shall have a huge reaction that the next shall have to face. Ibn ‘Umar’s *ḥadīth* scholarship on *fitan* must have helped him foresee these fatal events. In addition, his refusal would have left an impression on the rebels.

Finally, ‘Alī was sworn in. The way Abū Bakr’s selection was made hastily, and his public oath of allegiance was taken later, same happened in ‘Alī’s case. However, the near circle of the Prophet (*al-sābiqūn*) was intact in the earlier case, and the tribal mentality had almost faded under the influence of Islam. Moreover, Abū Bakr was not from a mainstream rival tribe, like the Hashemites or the Umayyads. On the other hand, during ‘Uthmān’s rule, *al-sābiqūn* got scattered all over the Islamic empire and his assassination further disintegrated them (see subchapter 1.6).

3.2.2 Battle of the Camel

At the time of ‘Alī’s ascension, not many of the senior companions were present. He was surrounded by people some of whom were with shadowy role in the killing of ‘Uthmān and many of them were not influential enough to keep the Quraysh united around ‘Alī. Hence, his reign (35/656 – 40/661) was marred by some uncertainty. ‘Alī was a prudent and judicious person by nature that brooked no compromise over principles. The conditions were not conducive so that he could easily fulfill his duties. Despite the inhibitions of the cautious and unfavorable political situation,⁵²³ he sent his trustworthy governors to various provinces. He also wished to send Ibn ‘Umar to Syria, but he declined as per past practice.⁵²⁴ In Syria, Mu‘āwiya had been fulfilling this job for the last twenty years. No sooner another governor was appointed, Mu‘āwiya refused to swear oath of allegiance of ‘Alī’s appointee. The causes of his refusal be probed in the last years of ‘Uthmān’s era. According to a historical narrative, ‘Uthmān called upon some governors including Mu‘āwiya for consultation. Although, Mu‘āwiya remained

⁵²¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 432.

⁵²² Sayf b. ‘Umar al-Tamīmī, *al-Fitnah wa Waq‘at al-Jamal* [Fitnah and the Battle of the Camel] (Amman: Dār al-Nafā‘is, 1993), 92; Ibid, IV, 432; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, V, 65.

⁵²³ al-Dīnawarī, *al-Ma‘ārif*, 98-99; I, 42; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 438-439.

⁵²⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 463; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XXXI, 181.

neutral during discussion, however, he chanced to meet the senior (*muhājir*) companions like Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām and ‘Alī before leaving for Syria. After the exchange of greetings, Mu‘āwiya remarked:

In the pre-Islamic days (*jāhiliyya*), every person spent his life within the branch of his tribe. There used to be a chieftain of each tribe who had an absolute authority over his people, and he would make decisions without any consultation. Then God sent us His Prophet Muhammad and honored his followers through him. After the demise of the Prophet, this prerogative of electing the leader was entrusted to a council whose members contested mutually on grounds of precedence, seniority, and efforts. If the members of the council carried on with this practice, people shall keep following them. However, if they are inclined to (win) materialism and sought the worldly gains by winning over each other then they shall be deprived of this prerogative. God shall replace this mode of leadership with the other one (i.e., a person) who used to lead people (in the pre-Islamic period). (Let such practitioners be on the alert), otherwise, they are forewarned of the change of days soon. Verily, this power rests with God, the arbiter of such a change. His is the prevalent will in matters of rulership and governance. I am leaving behind a *shaykh* (i.e., ‘Uthmān) amongst you. You do well with him, assist him and by doing so you shall be happier than him.”⁵²⁵

After having said so, Mu‘āwiya left immediately. When ‘Alī heard this, he became suspicious, whereas al-Zubayr ignored it as an offhand remark.⁵²⁶

Though Mu‘āwiya’s words were about the change brought by Islam; the importance of unity amongst members of the council and to bear good conduct with ‘Uthmān, however, the council members had been the greatest critics of those tribal elders who entered the fold of Islam lately. It seemed to them as if the public demonstrations against the Umayyad and tribalistic governors were spurred by the members of the council. Thus, Mu‘āwiya seems to forewarn these key members, namely Ṭalḥa, al-Zubayr and ‘Alī that if something happens to the current caliph, then the change in the mode of governance brought by Islam may get revoked and the same ruling class will turn head of state. Perhaps, the hidden meaning of the apparently positive talk was perceived by ‘Alī.

⁵²⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 344.

⁵²⁶ Ibid.

It was Mu‘āwiya’s first decision to spark the first wave of civil wars (34/655 – 41/662)⁵²⁷ that continued till he took over the caliphate in 41/662. This wave led to three armed conflicts among Muslims: The Camel, Şifḥīn and Nahrawān. A brief overview of these battles is given below:

The movement to avenge the blood of ‘Uthmān headed by the Umayyads had started even before the pledge of allegiance for ‘Alī was complete. This resulted in the first major event of civil strife, the battle of the Camel (36/656). In this battle ‘Alī was on one side (with his influential supporters like ‘Ammār b. Yāsir) and on the other side there were influential Muslim personalities like ‘Ā’isha, Ṭalha, al-Zubayr and his son Ibn al-Zubayr.⁵²⁸

It was a critical situation and the Muslims were infuriated. Ibn ‘Umar was counted amongst ‘Uthmān’s intimate associates till the very last moment, however, he did not lose his patience. He might have remembered the aggressive reaction of his father (‘Umar) during Ḥudaybiya and upon the Prophet’s demise which was in stark contrast with Abū Bakr’s calm and peaceful reaction.⁵²⁹ Earlier on Ibn ‘Umar had remained composed upon his father’s assassination contrary to his brother ‘Ubayd Allāh.⁵³⁰ This was the second major tragedy during which Ibn ‘Umar was not only sedate, self-controlled and cool-headed but also a person with deep theological conviction and non-reactionary.

According to historical traditions, leadership of both sides had the least idea that the situation shall turn out to be so disastrous. The confusions and misunderstanding started to dispel when dialogue started for example, the discussion among ‘Alī, al-Zubayr and Ṭalha. However, those people from both sides spoilt the peace talks who felt their position vulnerable and exposed if a peaceful resolution had taken place and unity prevailed.⁵³¹

The battle culminated in the victory of ‘Alī but with so much tragedy that neither the winner nor the loser was happy except for a group who remained neutral and favored neither party, and thus was saved from any collateral damage.⁵³² Many influential persons from senior companions, including two members of ‘Umar’s council (Ṭalha and al-Zubayr) got killed in the

⁵²⁷ Mu‘āwiya initiated the second wave of civil strife through nomination of his son Yazīd as his successor (see sub-chapters 4.13 and 4.14).

⁵²⁸ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3129, 3772, 7083; al-Tamīmī, *al-Fitnah*, 107-183; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 444-542.

⁵²⁹ Ibn Hishām, *al-Sīrah*, II, 316-317, 655-656.

⁵³⁰ ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, V, 478-80; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, no. 16083; ‘Alī b. Aḥmad Ibn Ḥazam, *al-Muḥallā bi al-’Āthār* [The Adorned Treatise] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, n.d.), XI, 357-58.

⁵³¹ *Ibid*, IV, 461-480.

⁵³² *Ibid*, IV, 442-545; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 449-487; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VII, 257-281.

battle.

Ibn ‘Umar⁵³³ refused to take part in the battle from either side and twice he stopped his sister Ḥafṣa from any involvement into it. On one occasion, she was about to accompany ‘Ā’isha in the armed conflict.⁵³⁴ Some sources claim that Ibn ‘Umar did not try to stop ‘Ā’isha as he found himself weaker against Ibn al-Zubayr who wanted to take her to the battlefield.⁵³⁵ Ibn ‘Umar might have felt that ‘Ā’isha had finally made up her mind and would not alter her decision.

Traditions report that later ‘Ā’isha regretted her participation in the battle and endorsed Ibn ‘Umar’s point of view. She even inquired why he had not prohibited her the way he did Ḥafṣa. His reply was that he found her nephew (Ibn al-Zubayr) had a prevailing influence over her.⁵³⁶ Ibn ‘Umar’s reply seems to corroborate the scenario that he could not relegate enough support from the senior companions like al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa to assert his point of view on that occasion.

Ibn ‘Umar’s response to both the camps was: ‘I am one of the Medinan. In either case if the people of Medina move to do so or else not, I shall do the same’.⁵³⁷ Most probably, Ibn ‘Umar wished to endorse the fact that Medina had remained the capital during the reigns of the Prophet and the three caliphs, and such decisions were made after consultation. Therefore, if the people of Medina or their representative council collectively decide to go to war, he would comply with the decision. It seems his stance acquiesced to the conduct of the Prophet in the times of Badr or Uḥud or Abū Bakr’s consultation during civil unrest.⁵³⁸ Here, Ibn ‘Umar seems to continue his father’s legacy of prioritizing Medina to other places for its being the permanent residence of senior companions till his father’s reign.

Imām Mālik was a protégé of Ibn ‘Umar’s mentee Nāfi‘. In *ḥadīth*, the authority of *Mālik from Nāfi‘ from Ibn ‘Umar* is considered the finest reference chain. Likewise, there is considerable influence of Ibn ‘Umar on Imām Mālik in the field of *fiqh*. Imām’s principle of Medinites’ practice seems to exhibit Ibn ‘Umar’s influence too and conforms to his statement: ‘I am one of the Medinan...’ (see subchapter 2.6). It is very likely that Ibn ‘Umar’s advice to both the groups to consult the people of Medina was an attempt to bring the parties to table. Had they

⁵³³ A number of companions like Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Usāma b. Zayd, Muhammad b. Maslama, Sa‘īd b. Zayd, Abū Hurayra, Ṣuhayb b. Sinān, Zayd b. Thābit, ‘Abd Allah b. Salām, etc. did not participate in any group.

⁵³⁴ al-Tamīmī, *al-Fitnah*, 118; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 446, 451; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 452-453.

⁵³⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 462.

⁵³⁶ Ibid, IV, 307-8.

⁵³⁷ al-Tamīmī, *al-Fitnah*, 118; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, III, 446, 451; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 452-453.

⁵³⁸ al-Hindī, *Kanz al-Ummāl*, no. 14164.

sought advice from the people of Medina, things would not possibly have exacerbated to war. Sa'īd Nūrsī (d. 1960) argues the divergent approaches between the two rival groups of the battle of the Camel in the context of 'absolute justice (*al- 'adālah al-mahḍah*) and relative justice (*al- 'adālah al-iḍāfiyyah*)'.⁵³⁹ I believe Nūrsī in his concise and comprehensive write-up hints at the two problems that 'Alī faced. First, 'Alī thought that the assassins shall be avenged after carrying out a proper judicious critical inquiry lest any innocent should come to harm. Probably, he held this view in the light of the Qur'ānic verse 5: 32 that true justice can never be administered when the innocents get killed along with the guilty ones. On the other hand, the relative justice denotes that the guilty must be punished at all costs even if those get killed whose involvement in the murder was uncertain. 'Alī did not accede to anything lesser than absolute justice and as a result, the battle of the Camel took place.

Ibn 'Umar had given his allegiance to 'Alī quite early to prevent further chaos. He also endorsed his notion of absolute justice and acted in his support. However, both 'Alī and Ibn 'Umar had a difference in status and as a result held a different perception about the concept of *absolute justice*. 'Alī was a caliph whose binding duty was to curtail any such possibility that may lead to bloodshed of innocents or forsake law and disrupt peace in society. Ibn 'Umar, on the other hand, acted in the capacity of an individual and was absolved of any such responsibility. An individual's sphere of action in the context of *absolute justice*, is to stay away from such measures that may kill any innocent directly or indirectly. It was this line of action that Ibn 'Umar and other like-minded senior companions took. He stopped those under his authority and called both the warring parties to dialogue. There was probably such unrest in Medina that Caliph 'Alī could not do so. As the trail of historic incidents show that back then, none of the rival groups had any intention to fight nor did they have any idea of the outcome. However, the stance of Ibn 'Umar and other senior companions suggest as if they got wind of a huge tragedy.

3.2.3 The Battle of Ṣiffīn and Arbitration

After the battle of the Camel, 'Alī turned to crush the Syrian governor who had refused to take the oath of allegiance. Thus, the battle of Ṣiffīn took place in 37/657.

⁵³⁹ Badiuzzaman Said Nursi, (Urdu translation): Thanā' Allah Shāhid, Muhammad 'Uthmān and others, *Maktūbāt* [The Letters], (Lahore: Kitāb Maḥal, 2017), 76.

‘Uthmān had married a young lady, Nā’ila bint al-Furāfiṣa from a Christian family of Kufa in his late seventies on the recommendation of ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ. She belonged to Banū Kalb and embraced Islam on the hand of ‘Ā’isha. She was with ‘Uthmān at the time of his martyrdom and her fingers got cut while shielding him. Besides making a public speech in Medina, she sent ‘Uthmān’s blood-stained shirt, the towed hair from his beard and her axed fingers along with her letter to Damascus. Mu‘āwiya displayed the gory relics in the mosque for almost a year to stir up the Syrians. As Banū Kalb’s stature in Syria was more of a ruling tribe, thus, to stand by Mu‘āwiya and support him meant a national war.⁵⁴⁰ Mu‘āwiya had been ruling over the Syrians for about two decades before the battle of Ṣiffīn and had already developed a good repo during this period. ‘Alī and his people needed some time to establish such a harmony.

The battle of Ṣiffīn ended in favour of ‘Alī but before suffering a decisive defeat the Syrian army carried copies of Qur’ān on tips of their lances as a ploy. They upheld that they should resolve the dispute over caliphate consulting the Qur’ān rather than killing each other. ‘Alī perceived this tactic and intended to give a conclusive end to the battle but some of his short-sighted accomplices misjudged the situation. They got emotional and compelled the caliph to make decision in light of the Qur’ān. When the unsuccessful peace dialogues proved that the Syrian army used it in a bid to save themselves from a defeat, the caliph’s army despaired at losing both a certain victory and the dialogue process. At this, they started blaming themselves and the caliph.⁵⁴¹ The unproductive outcome of war and dialogue led to fragmentation and revolt within the troops of ‘Alī.⁵⁴²

The combating of a much bigger and stronger power, engaging them in table talk and compelling them to return unsuccessfully strengthened the position of the Syrian Governor Mu‘āwiya.⁵⁴³ The very next year (38/658), he invaded Egypt and made it part of his territory.⁵⁴⁴ Mu‘āwiya had evolved from governor to a sovereign king during the lifetime of ‘Alī. He raided and plundered many places like ‘Ayn al-Tamr, Taymā’, Wāqīṣah that came under the control of ‘Alī in the following year (39/659) and even sent his appointee against ‘Alī to lead pilgrimage. The next year (40/660) he made multiple attacks on Medina, Mecca and Yemen and forcibly acquired the oath

⁵⁴⁰ Julius Wellhausen. *The Arab Kingdom and its Fall*. Translated by: Margaret Graham Weir (Calcutta: University of Calcutta, 1927), 75, 132-33.

⁵⁴¹ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 55-58.

⁵⁴² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 563-V, 72; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 489- IV, 217.

⁵⁴³ Ibid.

⁵⁴⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 93-95; *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 192; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, V, 149-153.

of allegiance from some people. He wished to compel ‘Alī to let Syria within Mu‘āwiya’s jurisdiction in which he was successful to the extent that an agreement was reached with ‘Alī.⁵⁴⁵ Surprisingly, after his ascension ‘Alī was given the same advice by Mughīrah b. Shu‘ba to keep Mu‘āwiya as governor over Syria.

Ibn ‘Umar maintained a neutral stance in the battle of Şifḫīn and considered it a fruitless clash. However, he played his part in the subsequent dialogue process (*taḥkīm*) to resolve the issue. On one occasion both sides agreed upon a solution that both ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya should step down and a third person be made caliph. Ibn ‘Umar's name was also proposed, however, the mediator from the Syrian side expressed his reservations. He expressed his approval in exchange for some lucrative offer but Ibn ‘Umar did not resort to any illegal means.⁵⁴⁶

Ibn ‘Umar’s words on this occasion were ‘Not at all, by God neither shall I take anything for (gaining) caliphate, nor shall I rake off (for assisting any other person to win caliphate). I shall accept it (caliphate) only if and when the Muslims accede to (my appointment as caliph)’.⁵⁴⁷ This clarifies that he did not deem it valid to use unlawful means like money, office, etc., to gain caliphate. In his opinion, the exemplary mode of caliphate is when made through public consensus. He did not favour any other idea for caliphate at least as far as his own personality was concerned. This also shows his inclusive approach in politics.

Ibn ‘Umar closely watched the discussion between the two arbiters i.e., ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ (from Mu‘āwiya’s side) and Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī (from ‘Alī’s side). At one point, when ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ said something derogatory about Abū Mūsā, Ibn ‘Umar commented, “who have been made responsible for the affairs of the *umma*. (Of the two) one is the least bothered about his actions whereas the other is a meek fellow”.⁵⁴⁸ Ibn ‘Umar had observed councils in the reigns of the Prophet and the first two caliphs. He himself had been an advisory member in ‘Umar’s council that selected ‘Uthmān. Therefore, his analysis of the two arbiters was based on personal

⁵⁴⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 133-140; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, V, 157-159; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, IV, 218-251. According to Ibn al-Jawzī, an understanding was reached between ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ and Mu‘āwiya against ‘Alī even before the battle of Şifḫīn [see: Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, V, 100]. Others hold that his support for Mu‘āwiya against ‘Alī was on condition of the governorship of Egypt.

⁵⁴⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 563, V, 72; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 489, IV, 217; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VII, 281-308.

⁵⁴⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar A‘lām al-Nubalā’*, IV, 316; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, I, 294.

⁵⁴⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 59; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, III, 550; Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Ansāb al-Ashrāf* [Genealogies of the Nobles] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1996), II, 351.

experience.

Ibn 'Umar's these comments are very significant. An evidence of Abū Mūsā's weak arbitration is his appointment without 'Alī's assent. Next, he should have come up with some practicable resolution that could be acceptable for both parties. For example, it was easy to decide that 'Alī should retain Mu'āwiya as governor and Mu'āwiya should accede to 'Alī's caliphate in return as the same was endorsed later through an agreement. Likewise, 'Uthmān laid down his life for not abdicating under duress, then how 'Alī could be removed perforce. Similarly, Ibn 'Umar's comments about 'Amr b. al-Āṣ are equally important which may be validated from his life events during the eras of 'Uthmān, 'Alī and Mu'āwiya. At that time, the focus of 'Amr's attention was not on serious dialogue but to avert the deadly defeat.

Ibn 'Umar was approached by Mu'āwiya before and through arbitration process (*taḥkīm*) and offered him if he stood against 'Alī, he shall be conferred with caliphate. Ibn 'Umar refused and remained loyal to 'Alī without engaging in mutual battles.⁵⁴⁹ Ibn 'Umar's neutrality in wars had perplexed Mu'āwiya. He doubted whether Ibn 'Umar aspired for caliphate himself or would assist someone else to win caliphate and gain privileges for himself. He deputed 'Amr to proffer Ibn 'Umar, 'Allow us a pledge in your favour as you are a companion of the Prophet and son of a caliph'. Ibn 'Umar replied, 'If my adversaries are as few as three, still I care nothing for caliphate.'⁵⁵⁰ 'Amr realized Ibn 'Umar would not fight for the caliphate and inquired whether he would swear an allegiance to one who wins public consensus and in return take money and chattels that would be more than enough for him and his posterity. Ibn 'Umar replied thus, 'Fie on you! Be gone and never come to me again. My *dīn* (faith) is not like your *dinār* or *dirham*. I wish to leave this world unblemished, with clean hands.'⁵⁵¹

Apparently, the discussion between Mu'āwiya and 'Amr b. al-Āṣ means they felt Ibn 'Umar to be a better candidate for caliphate than 'Alī and were willing to give him their allegiance. However, this is a remote possibility as on the occasion of arbitration between 'Alī and Mu'āwiya, 'Amr b. al-Āṣ did not approve of Ibn 'Umar. Likewise, Ibn 'Umar was present when the truce between Mu'āwiya and Imām Ḥasan was established during which Mu'āwiya did not give any statement to this effect. More so, after ruling for two long decades, he had enough time for the selection of a new caliph. Ibn 'Umar was present there but Mu'āwiya

⁵⁴⁹ Ibn al-A'tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 428-29.

⁵⁵⁰ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 164.

⁵⁵¹ *Ibid.*

showed least interest (see chapter four). The only viable possibility is that after the battle of the Camel, there was no other notable opponent of ‘Alī except for Mu‘āwiyā who did his utmost to challenge and weaken ‘Alī’s caliphate through bringing forth influential senior companions like Ibn ‘Umar. It is also probable that it was he who silently instigated al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa and ‘Ā’isha, etc., against ‘Alī through his Umayyad allies.

Traditions report that when the arbitration could not resolve the dispute, Ibn ‘Umar went to Jerusalem where he assumed *iḥrām* for ‘*umra* (an Islamic pilgrimage to Mecca).⁵⁵² It was easier for him to return to Medina for he was not required to visit Jerusalem to assume *iḥrām*. As chapter two mentions that Ibn ‘Umar used to visit monuments of the Prophet and *Bayt al-Maqdis* (Temple Mount) was (and is) one of the three most sacred mosques in Islam. According to the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, it was the location of the Prophet’s journey to Jerusalem (*‘isrā*) and ascension to heavens (*mi‘rāj*).⁵⁵³ The participation in arbitration had brought Ibn ‘Umar halfway closer to Jerusalem as it is only 711.6 km from Dumat al-Jandal. On the contrary, it is 1238.9 km away from Medina. For a devotee of the holy places, the shorter distance might have been an additional reason to visit Jerusalem and enter *iḥrām* herein. I think Ibn ‘Umar was trying to emulate the Prophet’s example of *‘isrā* / *mi‘rāj* as much as he could. The Prophet went from Mecca to *Bayt al-Maqdis* (*‘isrā*), he then was ascended to the heavens (*mi‘rāj*) and then he returned to Mecca. Similarly, Ibn ‘Umar went to *Bayt al-Maqdis*, wore *iḥrām* and then came to Mecca. This is what he could do to follow the Prophet. In *Bayt al-Maqdis*, Ibn ‘Umar must have recalled every piece of information he had learnt: the Prophet’s leading the prayer in *Bayt al-Maqdis*, the stone from where the Prophet was ascended, and the like. By doing so, Ibn ‘Umar was adding practical experience to his theoretical knowledge about the Prophet’s nighttime journey of *‘isrā* and *mi‘rāj*.

3.2.4 The Battle of Nahrawān

In the year 38/659, ‘Alī defeated a faction of rebels (Khawārij) in the battle of Nahrawān.⁵⁵⁴ This rebellious section of his own troops was unhappy with the mediation process after the battle of Ṣiffīn and deemed both sides as apostate. ‘Alī had an easy win.⁵⁵⁵ This war further consumed his armies’ energy while very well-established Syrian army in Damascus was getting

⁵⁵² al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, III, 552.

⁵⁵³ al-Qur’ān 17: 1; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3886-3888; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 162-177.

⁵⁵⁴ *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 197-199; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, IV, 255-257.

⁵⁵⁵ al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 214; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 143-152.

stronger and stronger.

Some sources mention Ibn ‘Umar’s regret at his absence from fighting “the rebellious tyrant group” indicated in a prophetic tradition.⁵⁵⁶ All seem to have agreed that the fourth caliph fought against this group, yet what seems disputed is the determination of this group as he fought three important battles: the Camel (against al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa and ‘Ā’isha, etc.), Ṣiffīn (against Mu‘āwīya, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ, etc.) and al-Nahrawān (against Khawārij). Traditions report that ‘Alī had never been so confident and self-satisfied in any battle other than al-Nahrawān.⁵⁵⁷ Ibn ‘Umar, not timely informed, could not join and therefore, his regret was probably upon his absence from fighting against Khawārij as he had seen their aggressive, violent, and uncompromising behavior against anyone who disagreed with them. This presumption is strengthened by the traditions that cite Ibn ‘Umar referring to the rebels as Khawārij (see also 6.2.3).⁵⁵⁸

Likewise, some traditions expound that with the passage of time ‘Alī might have held the stance of Ibn ‘Umar, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ and others as more appropriate. He is reported to have said, ‘Sa‘d and Ibn ‘Umar have an eminent and distinguished place. If they have erred by not taking part in these battles, then surely it is a minor and condonable lapse. But if their stance is correct, then they performed a meritorious and commendable job’.⁵⁵⁹ Though there is uncertainty in the authenticity of this tradition, still the negative outcome of the *fitan* battles endorsed Ibn ‘Umar’s position.⁵⁶⁰ Similarly, ‘Alī’s elder son Ḥasan held the same opinion as that of Ibn ‘Umar and majority of the companions (see also 3.3). Hence, it may be deduced that he had an inclination towards this stand (see also subchapter 6.1.2).

Ibn Khaldūn (d. 808/1406) writes, ‘The *ummah* witnessed two periods with regard to ‘Alī’s caliphate. In the initial one it was disputed whether ‘Alī’s allegiance be taken first or ‘Uthmān’s vengeance. Thus, the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn took place. Whereas it no longer remained a dispute in the later period and the *ummah* unanimously reached this conclusion that ‘Alī was a rightful caliph and his opinion was proper as compared to his opponents who erred in their

⁵⁵⁶ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1066.

⁵⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁵⁸ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3930, IX, 16; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, 5562; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VII, 327-335.

⁵⁵⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, III, 553, IV, 220; ‘Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Haythamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id wa Manba‘ al-Fawā‘id* [Unique Hadīth of Earlier Primary Collections] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Qudsī, 1994), no. VII, 246.

⁵⁶⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, II, 530.

judgment'.⁵⁶¹ Here, it is important to add that Ibn 'Umar was one of those who endorsed 'Alī's caliphate in the initial period.

The next year (40/661), 'Alī was assassinated either while he was on his way to *masjid* or was leading the *fajr* (dawn) Prayer. Similar to the Prophet, he did not name his successor and left the matter to be decided by the *umma*. Soon after his martyrdom, his elder son, Ḥasan was sworn in.⁵⁶²

In brief, a few more aspects of Ibn 'Umar's personality appear during the five-year reign of Caliph 'Alī. For instance, 'analyzing and assessing affairs on moral or spiritual grounds' come up when he is offered caliphate after the martyrdom of 'Uthmān.⁵⁶³ He declined the offer while prophesying the future battles based on his spiritual and moral reasoning. The next aspect is to avoid war and resort to dialogue. For example, before the battle of the Camel, he stopped his sister Ḥafṣa twice and also advised both the camps to gather the influential members of Medina for consultation. His voice rose when people in both the camps regretted over the deadly postwar situation. His avoidance from Ṣiffīn and partaking in the arbitration (*tahkīm*) substantiate the same. During arbitration, his name resurfaced as a viable alternative candidate for the caliphate.

Declining positions in the reigns of 'Uthmān and 'Alī shows that it was Ibn 'Umar's intentional decision from his early career. It gives a feeling as if he understood that the *fitan* forewarned by the Prophet would be political in nature. Turning down designations helped him approach the problem from a different angle and staying impartial and neutral made his stance more reasonable and acceptable in the later period. Some of Ibn 'Umar's important political ideas during these wars are as follows: 'A forced unpopular caliphate (without public approval) is not permissible', 'Unfair means for winning the caliphate (like bloodshed, bribery, designation or power) should not be used', 'Rewards (money, positions, etc.) in exchange for political support are not acceptable'.

For Ibn 'Umar, caliphate is not only political but religious too and the caliph should be a pious Muslim who acts upon in accordance with Islamic principles. His distance from 'Amr b. al-Āṣ

⁵⁶¹ 'Abd al-Rahmān b. Muḥammad ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-'Ibar wa Dīwān al-Mubtada' wa al-Khabar fī Ṭārīkh al-'Arab wa al-Barbar wa man 'Āsarahum min dhawī al-Sha'n al-Akbar* [Book of Lessons, Record of Beginnings and Events in the history of the Arabs and Berbers and their Powerful Contemporaries] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1988), I, 267-68.

⁵⁶² al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 214; Ibn al-A'tham, *al-Futūḥ*, IV, 277-279.

⁵⁶³ al-Ṭabarī, *Ṭārīkh*, IV, 432.

or Mu'āwiyah was actually based on his feelings that these figures prioritize to some extent the political nature of the caliphate over its religious dimension. Just like consensus, piety is equally important for Ibn 'Umar. Thus, we observe a serious clash between two world views where one legitimates various actions to get the power, the other is very sensitive and strict in keeping with a prophetic example. Clearly, there is a generational gap between Mu'āwiyah and Ibn 'Umar's understanding of the caliphate. Ibn 'Umar is very keen to keep alive the atmosphere of the time of felicity (*al-ʿaṣr al-saʿādah*) whereas Mu'āwiyah is aware of the changing conditions of the Muslim communities, involving heavily in worldliness, and also to some extent loosing old piety. In conclusion, we have an idealistic Ibn 'Umar challenging more realistic approaches of others.

3.3 The Reign of Imām Ḥasan

Imām Ḥasan's era is not quite momentous for being short in duration, however, it holds great significance in establishing unity and tranquility in the *ummah*. It was his withdrawal from the caliphate that Mu'āwiyah was able to rule for two decades peacefully. Ibn 'Umar's presence in the peace agreement between Imām Ḥasan and Mu'āwiyah increases its importance for this study. Therefore, the subchapter has been distributed into two sections: Section one will discuss Imām Ḥasan's election as caliph and his subsequent abdication and section two will study Ibn 'Umar's participation in the peace treaty.

3.3.1 Election as Caliph and Abdication

After the assassination of his father, Imām Ḥasan's accession was made. But soon he surrendered the caliphate to Mu'āwiyah in 41/661.⁵⁶⁴ Hence, the first wave of political turmoil came to an end after a Hashemite caliph stepped down in favor of an Umayyad's. Imām Ḥasan's efforts to keep the Quraysh united may be viewed as continuation of the endeavors of the Hashemites one after another (Hāshim, 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib, al-Zubayr b. 'Abd al-Muṭṭalib and Muhammad) from historical point of view (see chapter 1.1.1). There are different theories about the motives behind Imām's abdication, however, only that theory may be accepted that is reasonable.

The historical resources convey that Imām Ḥasan's views about politics were different from his father's 'Alī. For example, he was not of the opinion that his father might shift the capital from Medina. Likewise, at the time of the battle of the Camel, he suggested his father to give up the

⁵⁶⁴ A-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 216-218; Ibid, V, 163-165.

caliphate and stay away from people.⁵⁶⁵ Therefore, the theory of selling off the caliphate to Mu‘āwiya⁵⁶⁶ in exchange of concessions seems contradictory to his personality.

On the contrary, the policy of luring opponents or spreading rumors had remained a pretty common practice throughout the lifespan in the political career of Mu‘āwiya. His real motive was to conceal the actual agreement and facilitate his son’s nomination as the future caliph. It also seems not a far-off possibility that Imām was so disappointed at the attitude of Iraqi people that he handed over the caliphate to Mu‘āwiya.⁵⁶⁷ He had lived in Iraq during the caliphate days of his father and knew them very well.

The theory that befits Imām’s personality is if he had not accepted caliphate, someone else would have and consequently the state’s two factions would have remained at loggerheads once again. In all likelihood, Imām ascended for two reasons: One, to abdicate officially in favour of Mu‘āwiya so that the people of Iraq are left with no moral grounds to wage war against him. Second, after Mu‘āwiya, election of the caliphs will be made on the grounds of *shūrā* (mutual consultation), and the mode of governance shall revert to Islamic caliphate.⁵⁶⁸ This rationale is more belike of Imām’s personality and is creditable enough that the prophecies of the Prophet be applied to it (see also subchapter 6.2.4).⁵⁶⁹

3.3.2 Ibn ‘Umar’s Participation in the Peace Treaty

History also alludes to Ibn ‘Umar participation in the mediation process between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya.⁵⁷⁰ However, historians differ on the date of this crucial event. As per some historians, it took place in 41/661 when a peace agreement was made between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya while some chroniclers hold that the incident occurred in 37/657 when arbitration was held between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya.

Ibn ‘Umar himself narrates the tradition that on the occasion of arbitration, his sister Ḥafṣa mentioned to him, ‘Nothing befits you (Ibn ‘Umar!) except for peace. May Allāh procure peace and unity in the *ummah* through you. You are a brother-in-law to the Prophet and son of Caliph

⁵⁶⁵ al-Tamīmī, *al-Fitnah*, 107, 120; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 445, 456; Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, 612.

⁵⁶⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 158; Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 59.

⁵⁶⁷ Ibid, V, 158.

⁵⁶⁸ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn Ḥajar al-Haytamī, *al-Ṣawā‘iq al-Muḥriqah fī al-Radd ‘lā Ahl al-Bid‘ wa al-Ḍalāl wa al-Zandaqah* [An Attack on Religious Innovators, Deviates and Heretics] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risāla, 1997), II, 399.

⁵⁶⁹ *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2704, 3629, 3746, 7109.

⁵⁷⁰ al-Haythamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā‘id*, no. 7075.

‘Umar b. al Khaṭṭāb’.⁵⁷¹ (Ibn ‘Umar stated that) he headed off soon after and on reaching the place found that people had almost developed a consensus on naming him (Ibn ‘Umar) as the next caliph. Mu‘āwiya too came while riding on a mammoth red camel. Mu‘āwiya seeing Ibn ‘Umar attending the arbitration (conjectured that he intended to win caliphate). (With this thought in mind, Mu‘āwiya pointing towards Ibn ‘Umar) spoke thus: ‘Who amongst present aspired for caliphate’.⁵⁷² (Ibn ‘Umar reported:) I intended to say (in response): ‘(That person intends) who had battled against him and his father for the sake of Islam till (Mu‘āwiya and his father) both were compelled to embrace it’. But he did not say it out lest his words should spur discord and hostility. He exercised self-restraint and further mused on the blessings of the day of Judgment to subdue himself and consciously evaded an argument with Mu‘āwiya.⁵⁷³

Ibn ‘Umar’s ire and resentment upon Mu‘āwiya’s provoking words were natural but exhibiting patience was not an easy job. It seems that the same self-discipline, and tolerance molded his character during the times of unrest (*fitan*). Traditions report that after this incident, when Ibn ‘Umar reached home, Ḥabīb b. Maslama al-Fihri (d. 42/662) asked him why he had not said anything in response to Mu‘āwiya. Ibn ‘Umar gave the same reasons as written above. At this Ḥabīb hailed him for control over his emotions and that he was saved (from getting indulged into *fitan*).⁵⁷⁴ Though this is a subjective approach but neither irrelevant nor lacks in interest to consider Ibn ‘Umar’s psychic make when he chooses to wage his peace despite of Mu‘āwiya’s affronting remarks. Ibn ‘Umar’s attitude may be referred to his adolescence dream (see subchapter 2.1.2).⁵⁷⁵

At the time of his dream, he was merely a teenager who was predominantly a pious, truthful, and devout worshipper. In those days he prayed: ‘O Allāh! If I possess a scruple of goodness in me, bless me with a good dream’.⁵⁷⁶ A dream seen at a tender innocent age seems to hold great significance. More so, any other crisis as grave as the civil unrest did not strike Ibn ‘Umar’s life. Thus, had he opted for tribal prejudice in response to (tribal) bigotry at this crucial

⁵⁷¹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 182; ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Ḥimyārī, *al-Juz’* [A Booklet on Ḥadīth] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 1998), no. 8; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn al-A‘rābī, *al-Mu‘jam* [Lexicon of Ḥadīth] (Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1997), no. 1595.

⁵⁷² Ibid.

⁵⁷³ Ibid.

⁵⁷⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 59; Ibn al- Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, II, 684.

⁵⁷⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3738-3740, 1121; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 6057-58.

⁵⁷⁶ Ibid.

juncture, it could even damage reconciliation between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya. However, Ibn ‘Umar combated the tribal prejudice with his forbearance, courage, and god-fearing qualities, therefore, its outcome was obviously different.

In short, Ibn ‘Umar’s participation in the treaty substantiates his indulgence in peace and avoidance from wars. As a notable scholar of *ḥadīth*, he must have been aware of the Prophet’s prophecy about Imām’s role in ‘a reconciliation between two major groups of the Muslim *ummah*’.⁵⁷⁷ Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on *fitan* has close resemblance with that of Imām Ḥasan regarding peace building and his position must have been strengthened after the positive impact of this reconciliation. Likewise, despite the provocations from Mu‘āwiya during the treaty, Ibn ‘Umar self-control shows how he could hold his temper for the great interest of the *ummah*.

3.4 Transfer of the Caliphate from the Senior Companions to the Meccan Tribal Leadership

The focus of this subchapter is to develop an understanding of *fitan*. For this purpose, all the detail present in the previous subchapters has been summed up briefly followed by a critical analysis. In order to have a better insight into *fitan* wars, we need an understanding of the parties involved and their clashes. Therefore, the subchapter has been divided into three sections: The first section discusses how the caliphate shifted from the hands of the Prophet’s intimate companions; The second interprets causes of these wars whereas the third deals with the intellectual clash between the two rival parties.

3.4.1 Transfer of Caliphate to the Tribal Elders

This transfer took place in the following stages:

1. The Meccan tribal elders embraced Islam by the conquest of Mecca and later migrated to Medina to become part of the Islamic state.
2. These elders made a gradual progress and won top state positions in military and politics displacing the natives i.e., *anṣār*.
3. The senior companions (*al-sābiqūn*) in Medina were the earlier converts to Islam who were groomed by the Prophet himself. ‘Umar had this realization and thus he deliberately kept this group close together in Medina. The next Caliph ‘Uthmān could not restrict their spread outside Medina and hence the tribal elders and specially Caliph ‘Uthmān’s tribe (the Umayyads) augmented their political influence.

⁵⁷⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2704

4. The assassination of ‘Uthmān resulted in a rift among the remaining senior companions rendering them unable to combat the rising influence of the Umayyad leaders.

5. The next Caliph ‘Alī came from the Hashemites, a tribe that the Meccan elders especially the Umayyads felt insecure of, and they challenged his legitimacy.

6. ‘Alī was assassinated after navigating a five-year long politically instable government with the result that the political power went straight in the hands of the Umayyad leadership.

These issues determine the direction of the following discussions, and I will analyze the next developments in the light of these important articles.

3.4.2 Causes of Tribal Elders’ Migration to Medina

The Meccan elders were summoned by the Prophet himself to come and settle in Medina. Later, during the era of Abū Bakr their mass migration took place. Here a question arises: Did the Prophet have no premonition regarding the consequences of this migration? The Prophet was fully aware of the outcome, and he had discussed it in detail. However, had they stayed in Mecca, that would have run graver risks? The same shall come under discussion next.

The Prophet had indicated that the natives in Medina (*anṣār*), owing to the mass migration of Meccan elders, would face a demographic change in near future. The migrants will become more influential than the natives and they shall face bias towards themselves, but the natives should show perseverance.⁵⁷⁸ Similarly the Prophet had foreseen the weakening position of his senior companions (*al-sābiqūn*).⁵⁷⁹ Moreover, the tribes who had recently submitted more for political reasons, the Prophet augured among them false claimants of the prophethood, apostasy and political revolt after his demise.⁵⁸⁰ Likewise, the Quraysh were much better disposed for leadership than any other tribe both politically and religiously as was predicted by the Prophet

⁵⁷⁸ Ibid, no. 3147; Ma‘mar, *al-Jāmi‘*, no. 19917; ‘Abd al-Razzāq, *al-Muṣannaf*, V, 430.

⁵⁷⁹ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2897, 3594, 3649; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2532.

It is worth mentioning that at an occasion when a recently converted Khālīd b. al-Walīd used some abusive words against a senior companion of the Prophet, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, the Prophet reprehended Khālīd, saying: “don’t abuse my companions” [*Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3620, 3673; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no.2541]. For a Muslim today both Khālīd and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf are the companions of the Prophet. However, in the anecdote mentioned above, the Prophet used the word “*aṣḥābī* i.e. companions” only for the senior convert (‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf) and not for later convert Khālīd.

⁵⁸⁰ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3620, 4373; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2273.

(الأئمة من قريش).⁵⁸¹ It was for this reason, one may observe that even those leaders of the Quraysh ascended to power who had embraced Islam quite late and had comparatively less acumen in religion (*dīn*).⁵⁸² It seems that with this realization the Prophet had mentally prepared his senior companions to comply with authority and keep on serving even in non-religious spheres no matter how morally inferior the ruler might be. They were taught to fulfil their duties and ask God for their rights.⁵⁸³ He also forewarned that the political turmoil shall befall owing to the desire for power of the inexperienced youth of the Quraysh (غلمة من قريش).⁵⁸⁴

After this brief background information, let us probe for the reasons why were the Meccan elders encouraged to migrate to Medina despite the presence of the trained senior converts (*al-sābiqūn*). The mass conversion to Islam in the Arabian Peninsula took place after the conquest of Mecca, and it was triggered by the conversion of the Meccan tribal elders. As long as these leaders were in Mecca, the Arabian Peninsula was politically distributed between Meccan and Medinan states. The Prophet wanted to politically strengthen the Medinan state by uniting both. The only viable solution to this problem was sharing of power, therefore, he encouraged these leaders to migrate to Medina. The Prophet during his last days even decided to utilize their influence to counter the movements of Musaylimah (d. 12/633) and that of others in the Arabia. More importantly, if these Meccan elders were not integrated in the mainstream politics of Medina, there was possibility of a parallel Meccan government that might join hands with its former allies against the Medinan government. In this way, the very early history of Islam would have witnessed a tug of war between the Meccan and the Medinan states as happened between Caliph 'Alī vs Mu'āwiya and 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr vs Umayyad rulers (Marwān and 'Abd Malik b. Marwān) during the two waves of *fitan*.

The Quraysh had historically been leading polytheism since long which was the main adversary in the way of the Prophet preaching monotheism. Therefore, power sharing with the tribal leaders who had recently entered in the Muslim *ummah* was comparatively a lesser evil as compared to resurgence of polytheism. A research study on *fitan* from this angle might be an important chapter of *sīrah*.

⁵⁸¹ al-Ṭayālīsī, *al-Musnad*, no. 2247; Nu'aym b. Ḥammād al-Marwazī, *al-Fitan* [The Trials] (Cairo: Maktabat al-Tawḥīd, 1991), 287; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 32388; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 12307.

⁵⁸² *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1586, 3146, 4334; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 537, 1059; Yāqūb b. Ibrāhīm Abū Yūsuf, *al-'Āthār* [The Traditions] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-'Ilmiyyah, n.d.), no. 390.

⁵⁸³ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3603, 7052, 7142; *Saḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1843; al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 1706, 2676.

⁵⁸⁴ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3605, 7058; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 8304, 10927.

3.4.3 The Difference between the Early Converts (*al-Sābiqūn*) and the Tribal Leaders

At this point another aspect may intrigue us to probe further: Why ‘Alī, who belonged to the group of close companions, could not be successful against Mu‘āwiya? A significant reason could be the difference in the thinking pattern between the early converts (*al-sābiqūn*) and the tribal faction. The *sābiqūn* group exercised a scrutiny judiciously in all matters and was more concerned about morality and religion. On the contrary, the tribal group went for more practical options with better feasibility and gain. Thus, for the tribal bandwagon, the reaction of *al-sābiqūn* on any given matter stood very much predictable, whereas the response of the tribal leaders remained uncertain. This may further be elaborated through a few examples. ‘Alī was being counseled by his uncle, ‘Abbās who belonged to the tribal group when ‘Umar’s council met to elect a caliph. ‘Alī refused to take his word as it did not meet the moral and religious criteria. Similarly, ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ and Mu‘āwiya both had the tribal bend of mind, and they had a good bonding relation as shared a pro-tribalistic outlook. This shows that two radically different approaches that prevailed amongst Muslims. This distinctly different approach was exhibited more clearly when the generation of religiously strong Hashemite passed away and the latter generation fought against the Umayyads in a tribalistic fashion and succeeded in wiping out the Umayyads from the eastern front (Asia and Africa) very quickly.

Ibn ‘Umar was one of the senior companions during *fitan*. He aspired for the same as did other senior companions (*sābiqūn*) and opposed the tribal mode of politics. But what differentiated him from the rest of the companions involved in *fitan* wars is his wish to acquire all through peaceful means and he deemed violence a wrongful way to caliphate.

Conclusion

This chapter offers some fresh aspects of *fitan* battles, in particular, the foreknowledge of the Prophet of the tribal, social, and political conditions in Arabia that later led to civil wars. Keeping these realities in mind, he wanted to melt all leading Arabs in a pot under the banner of Islam.

The battles of *fitan* seem to be deeply related to the emigration of Meccan Qurayshite leadership to Medina and the subsequent power-sharing with them. The acclimate of Meccan superiority in Medina became possible due to the Prophet’s instruction. Politically this was an insightful step with multiple benefits. It included uniting Arabia that was hitherto divided into monotheism and polytheism, warding off any possible civil unrest after his death through the influence of these tribal elders and the like. Moreover, if a rift develops amongst the intimate

companions, then these tribal elders – with more thirst for power- roll on with the Islamic history even at the cost of worldly benefits as a by-product.

Fresh aspects of Ibn ‘Umar’s life during *fitan* also appear as his scattered brief sayings, dialogues and speeches are gleaned together from the primary Islamic resources and are then reviewed in their peculiar historical contexts. One such aspect is his wisdom and farsightedness i.e., the ability to see future through present incidents and sharp wisdom to penetrate the events to perceive the consequences. This enabled him to foretell accurately the subsequent results during the first wave of unrest. For instance, before the martyrdom of ‘Uthmān, he hinted at a few serious repercussions during his address to the protesters that later took place during the reign of ‘Alī.

Likewise, policy of non-violence and consultation in crucial times, negotiations and dialogues are his other notable merits. For example, he acted as an intermediary and conducted dialogues between Caliph ‘Uthmān and the protesters; his judicious advice to him to assign ‘Alī the job of negotiation with the protesters; then not only he himself did not take part in any of the battles but he advised both the parties before the battle of the Camel to consult with the influential figures of Medina as a peacebuilding strategy; his participation in the arbitration (*taḥkīm*) between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya and conciliation (*ṣulḥ*) between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya bespeak volumes about his peace loving personality.

The evaluation of matters from an ethical perspective and making decisions using moral reasoning is another attribute of Ibn ‘Umar. His deontological ethics seem to prevail over his general conduct wherein he abides by ethics as obligatory disregarding the consequences specially in his personal affairs. Many of his judgments may only be understood when viewed from this perspective. For instance, he was approached by the protesters after ‘Uthmān’s to become caliph and his rejection. Likewise, during arbitration between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya, there arose an opportunity of his accession to caliphate in exchange of some bribe, but he declined. This chapter has also discussed socio-theological aspects of Ibn ‘Umar’s this conduct.

This chapter also deals with such incidents that reveal Ibn ‘Umar as a theo-political thinker. For example, his words upon the offer of caliphate in return for bribe (during arbitration): “I am not willing to become caliph without public approval” seem to embody the Islamic juristic principle of *ijmā’* and are close in spirit to the modern concept of democracy (i.e., rule of the people, for the people, by the people) despite of being antiquated in appearance. Similarly, his saying “I will neither become a caliph by paying bribe nor will I help anyone to become a caliph by taking

a bribe”⁵⁸⁵ marks his transparent and principled politics and theology. This elaborates on his sensitivity and deep awareness about political corruption.

⁵⁸⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 464; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XXXI, 184.

4. Chapter Four: Ibn ‘Umar during the Umayyad Dynasty I - Sufyanid Era (41/662 – 64/684)

This chapter has two aims: One, the second wave of *fitan* and two, Ibn ‘Umar’s efforts to restore peace and find a way to unite people under a common banner. However, the second wave is too long in duration to be covered in a single chapter. The Umayyad caliphate consists of two periods i.e., Sufyanids (41/662 – 64/684) and Marwanids (64/684 – 132/750). In accordance with these reigns, discussion on the second wave is divided into two chapters. This chapter is about Sufyanid’s era whereas the next one is exclusively about Marwanid’s reign till Ibn ‘Umar’s death in 73/693. These chapters discuss *fitan* battles as backdrop of the political happenings so that they form a contextual background of Ibn ‘Umar’s constructive efforts which are the main focus of this study. Sufyanid era, with three rulers, covers the next twenty-two years of Ibn ‘Umar’s life i.e., years fifty-two to seventy-three of his age.

This chapter has three arguments: First, whenever a situation arose before Ibn ‘Umar in which he could choose between a *ḥasan* (good) and an *aḥsan* (better) options, he would often go for the *aḥsan* (better) one. Likewise, ever there came a tie between an evil and a lesser evil, he would usually opt for the lesser evil. Second, Ibn ‘Umar’s conduct during the battles of *fitan* does not seem to be reactionary. Rather it looks like a well deliberated response as if he had considered all options ... as though he knew his limitations for supporting or opposing any of the candidates. Third, Ibn ‘Umar strongly believed that peaceful transfer of power is only possible when it is made with the public consensus.

4.1 The Reign of Mu‘āwiya

Imām Ḥasan’s abdication provided a good beginning to the Umayyad dynasty and Mu‘āwiya’s two-decade-long period was generally peaceful. As peace prevailed and the incidents of civil unrest did not happen hence Ibn ‘Umar’s political activities came in the limelight very rarely. However, his house remained the hub of his socio-religious activities. The most significant incident in the latter half of Mu‘āwiya’s era that gave birth to the second wave of unrest was his efforts to galvanize support for Yazīd. It is also very interesting to see how Ibn ‘Umar countered these efforts.

This subchapter studies Mu‘āwiya’s era in four sections: section one deals with Mu‘āwiya as caliph, section two discusses Ibn ‘Umar’s socio-religious activities, section three explores Ibn

‘Umar’s reaction to Mu‘āwiya’s nomination of Yazīd as his successor and section four considers Mu‘āwiya’s response to Ibn ‘Umar’s uncompromising and principled position.

4.1.1 Mu‘āwiya as Ruler

Mu‘āwiya’s is a notoriously contentious personality⁵⁸⁶ with such a blend of successes and failures that it is quite hard to write about him. A look at his successes shows him one of the important rulers of Islamic history. Had these two incidents not occurred, his era might have been known as an extension of Rashidun Caliphate.

Regardless of Mu‘āwiya’s good intentions, the way he took control of the state that led to a five-year-long first wave of civil strife. He caused unrest in the state by not acceding to ‘Alī’s caliphate and it went on till he won the caliphate himself. The other incident that sparked the second wave of twelve-year-long *fitan* wars was his decision on Yazīd despite the warnings from many companions.

Mu‘āwiya’s era was distinctly remarkable for its peace and economic, military, and political achievements. But the way he laid down foundation of his dynasty, it changed the course of the whole Islamic history. Though he had the knack for good governance, but he was the first ever Muslim ruler to seize power without public approval⁵⁸⁷ that had so far been the main pillar of the Islamic-based Caliphate. Thus, there was a big difference in the mode of governance between an elected ruler and an autocrat. The latter’s absolutism reached to a point that the heir-apparent to the throne was named as happens in monarchy. Consequently, the council thrived on a strong majority from one particular tribe or another and was not strengthened by the senior companions. Moreover, this tribal mode of governance (monarchy) led to a gradual decline in the self-accountability of the ruler which was the hallmark in the early caliphates.

Mu‘āwiya’s ascension to power, his changing the mode of the caliphate to monarchy⁵⁸⁸ and depriving the *ummah* from the rule of senior companions were comparatively a lesser evil. Its major fall out was scraping off the Islamic principles from the political arena which brings it closer to our contemporary democracy. These principles include public consensus for the election of a caliph, God-consciousness, expertise in Islamic knowledge, self-accountability,

⁵⁸⁶ Donald P. Little, “Mu‘āwiyah I”, Encyclopædia Britannica, inc., date published: September 03, 2020, date accessed: September 18, 2020, <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Muawiyah-I>>.

⁵⁸⁷ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, II, 650.

⁵⁸⁸ World History Encyclopedia, Syed Muhammad Khan, “Umayyad_Dynasty”, Accessed on: February 02, 2022, <https://www.ancient.eu/Umayyad_Dynasty>

transparent and corruption-free politics, etc. If these principles were retained, they could possibly cause such a legislation that on the one hand government would have been formed by public opinion and on the other civil rights would have been preserved avoiding the *fitan* civil wars in future. Similarly, it could evolve into a better democratic setup in a shorter period.

Contrarily, there is another tendency too that justifies Mu‘āwiya’s rule from historical sources. There are various traditions of the Prophet that foretell the happy events which got materialized in this era.⁵⁸⁹ During his rule, the capital was shifted to Damascus, and it looks that he had intended this shift since ‘Uthmān’s caliphate. The last days of ‘Uthmān were turbulent and seeing the political turmoil, Mu‘āwiya suggested him to move with him to Damascus which was declined.⁵⁹⁰

Before taking charge of the caliphate in Syria, Mu‘āwiya had remained its governor for about twenty years.⁵⁹¹ His relationship with Syria spanned over the course of generations. His great grandfather, Umayya b. ‘Abd Shams – from whom originates the title of the Umayyad family – had to live in Syria for ten years after his exile from Mecca owing to a dispute with his uncle Hāshim.⁵⁹² Similarly, his father, Abū Sufyān is known to have owned some land near Damascus before Islam which later was inherited by Mu‘āwiya and his children.⁵⁹³ This long-term relationship probably caused Caliph ‘Umar to appoint Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān as Syrian governor prior to his brother Mu‘āwiya.

This shows that Mu‘āwiya had affiliations or relations present in Syria as later he himself built. Majority of the Syrian population belonged to a Christian Arab tribe, the Kalbites. Mu‘āwiya had married Maysūn (d. 80/700), daughter of the chieftain of the Kalbites, Bahdal b. Unayf (d. 650s). His son, Yazīd was born from this union.⁵⁹⁴ Likewise, he had another wife, Nā’ila bint ‘Umāra from Banū Kalb too who was a cousin to Maysūn. However, this relationship could not last long. In short, both Syrians and Mu‘āwiyah (along with his family) were familiar to each other.

Syria had remained the seat of bureaucracy earlier in the Byzantine government. It may safely be inferred that its developed administrative infrastructure, a well-organized military, and

⁵⁸⁹ Ibid, I, 257.

⁵⁹⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 345; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VII, 190-191.

⁵⁹¹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 133.

⁵⁹² Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 76.

⁵⁹³ Aḥmad b. Yaḥyā al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān* [The Origins of the Islamic State] (Beirut: Dār wa Maktabat Hilāl, 1988), 131; Madelung, *The Succession to Muhammad*, 45.

⁵⁹⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 36.

political discipline had much to lend to the newly established Arab state. Wellhausen asserts that the Syrians had a history of hereditary kingship, and they just transferred their wonted obedience to Mu‘āwiya.⁵⁹⁵ It is highly probable that many organizations that are attributed to him had already been there as a remnant of Byzantine Empire, and he introduced them to the Islamic world, such as postal services, hospitals, and prisons, etc.⁵⁹⁶

The Western historians treasure Mu‘āwiya. It might be that he had not won popularity amongst the people with Islamic bend of mind in the East; hence he relied much on the Christian Arab tribe, Banū Kalb of Syria and might have showed greater lenience and tolerance towards them as compared to other Muslim rulers.⁵⁹⁷ Also, his marriage in this tribe most probably facilitated its members to win much prominence. Similarly, it may be conjectured that after the Islamic conquests, Damascus regained a central position with the ascension of Mu‘āwiya that it enjoyed during the Byzantine rule.⁵⁹⁸ History chronicles narrate that in order to strengthen his armed forces against the ‘Alī, he made a truce agreement with the Byzantine government for which they were given due payments.⁵⁹⁹

Mu‘āwiya’s style of facing opposition during his governance was not a direct armed conflict. Rather he used monetary inducements, intimidated, or threatened key allies of his opponent camp and thus weakened his adversaries in one way or the other. Mu‘āwiya had loyal supporters in the close circle of the ‘Alī who provoked the Caliph against his righteous, effective, and loyal governors to ensure the appointment of such individuals who are favourable to the Syrian side. This happened in case of Qays b. Sa‘d.⁶⁰⁰

Qays was the appointed governor of Egypt during ‘Alī’s reign. The geographical location of Egypt was such that Syria was situated between Egypt and the rest of the Muslim states of Islamic empire. Mu‘āwiya aspired to win over Egypt at all costs so that he may not be at war on two fronts (East and West) in his revolt against ‘Alī. There was a mixed lot in the Egyptian population. There were supporters of ‘Alī and those who sought to avenge ‘Uthmān’s murder.

⁵⁹⁵ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 182-83.

⁵⁹⁶ The imitation of administrative procedures had evolved during centuries of Roman and Byzantine rule there. See: Donald P. Little “Muawiyah-I,”; Foss, Clive, “[A Syrian Coinage of Mu‘āwiya](https://www.persee.fr/doc/numi_0484-8942_2002_num_6_158_1451)”, *Revue Numismatique*, Year: 2002, Issue: 158, pp. 355-56, <https://www.persee.fr/doc/numi_0484-8942_2002_num_6_158_1451>.

⁵⁹⁷ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 132-34.

⁵⁹⁸ Khan, “Umayyad_Dynasty”; Little “Muawiyah-I”.

⁵⁹⁹ Little “Muawiyah-I”.

⁶⁰⁰ Ibn Khaldūn, *Kitāb al-‘Ibar*, II, 623-624.

Mu‘āwīya provoked the latter group against ‘Alī’s appointed governor but owing to Qays’ political adeptness he could not succeed. Likewise, Mu‘āwīya tried to buy Qays but in vain. Finally, Mu‘āwīya spread the rumour that Qays has made an alliance with him. When this news reached ‘Alī, he replaced Qays with Muhammad b. Abī Bakr with the consequence that finally Egypt fell to Mu‘āwīya.⁶⁰¹

Mu‘āwīya used political manoeuvres and tactics not only to weaken the Hashemite but also other influential branches of his own tribe, the Umayyads, for instance the branch al-‘Ās.⁶⁰² Once Sa‘īd b. al-‘Ās (d. 59/679) who was the then governor of Medina received orders from Mu‘āwīya to demolish Marwān’s house that he refused to obey. As a punishment, he was dismissed and Marwān was replaced on his post with the orders to demolish Sa‘īd’s house.⁶⁰³ Both belonged to the house of al-‘Ās branch of the Umayyads (‘Uthmān was also from this same offshoot). Mu‘āwīya discerned an upswing movement in this branch as compared to his own and hence desired to develop a rift within the clan. Later, the same happened which Mu‘āwīya’s eye had foreseen. In next few years after his death, the successors from his lineage could not grapple with the rebellion and the sovereign rule came in the hands of Marwān (see chapter five).

In brief, the above-mentioned examples reveal that Mu‘āwīya’s political approach was much pragmatic, self-centered and tribalistic which could readily disregard the moral principles of Islam. Similarly, his philosophy of politics was narrow and could not think in broader terms, like the interests of the Arabs or of the whole Muslim *ummah*.

4.1.2 Ibn ‘Umar’s Socio-Religious Activities

‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar continued his voluntarily services without holding any designation. Before the Umayyad dynasty, the Prophet, and his intimate companions focused on the grass root level. Ibn ‘Umar’s position was no different. During this reign, Ibn ‘Umar’s dwelling place was a hub of his educational and edificational activities, social work, the empowerment and education of women, the protection of rights of the weaker lot (like the orphans), liberating slaves in great number and making them independent through education and training and the like. It was owing

⁶⁰¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 549-52.

⁶⁰² Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 182-83.

⁶⁰³ Marwān was about to implement these orders but stopped after seeing Mu‘āwīyah’s letter with Sa‘īd giving him the same orders regarding his house. The anecdote contains very interesting information on Mu‘āwīyah’s politics. [Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 91-92].

to these constructive activities that he was looked up with high esteem, won prominence and a dignified moral stature in society. The ruling Umayyads' controversial mode of governance must have resulted in estrangement of Ibn 'Umar with them and he must have paid more attention to the abovementioned activities. His position of a religious mentor in public – who followed his example – must not have allowed him to frequent the nobility and the courts as it would have lent accreditation to Mu'āwīya's conduct and could have given wrong vibes in society. Some discussion on Ibn 'Umar's social and educational activities has already passed in subchapters 2.5 and 2.6 and some will follow briefly in the coming pages.

Ibn 'Umar also took part in military expeditions when invited by the state. For example, on declaration of the campaigns in 49/669 in Roman Empire, he along with other companions participated and reached as far as Constantinople at the age of 60.⁶⁰⁴

Ibn 'Umar was related to Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn. One of their sisters, Umm Kulthūm bint 'Alī was married to 'Umar and they had a son, Zayd b. 'Umar. This Zayd was better known as 'son of the two caliphs' (*Ibn al-Khalīfatayn*), as both his father 'Umar and maternal grandfather, 'Alī were caliphs. He got hit accidentally while he interposed to dissolve a family dispute amongst people and breathed his last at the age of 26 in 49/669. His mother, Umm Kulthūm could not bear this shock and died there and then. Ibn 'Umar was asked by the Imāms to lead the funeral prayer of both the mother, Umm Kulthūm and her son, Zayd.⁶⁰⁵ This incident exhibits his position in the household of the Prophet especially in the eyes of Imām Ḥasan, who had remained a caliph but still asked Ibn 'Umar to lead the funeral prayer. Besides religious reasons, Ibn 'Umar perhaps found large gatherings at funerals as an opportunity of teaching and learning that he availed. One such occasion was the funeral of his kinsman Sa'īd b. Zayd (d. 51/671). Sa'īd was an early convert and according to some traditions, he was the 14th person to embrace Islam. Sa'īd was also a cause of 'Umar's conversion.⁶⁰⁶ Some traditions state that Ibn 'Umar skipped the obligatory Friday's congregational prayer to take part in his funeral and buried him with his own hands.⁶⁰⁷

Another funeral was of 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr. 'Abd al-Raḥmān was also against Mu'āwīya's efforts to secure an oath of allegiance in favour of his son (Yazīd). Mu'āwīya had

⁶⁰⁴ Like Ibn 'Abbās, Ibn al-Zubayr, Abū Aayyūb al-Anṣārī, etc. See: al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 232.

⁶⁰⁵ Muḥammad b. Ḥabīb al-Baghdādī, *al-Munammaq fī Akhbār Quraysh* [The Book of Embellishment: Reports on the Quraysh] (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1985), 312.

⁶⁰⁶ Ibn al-Athīr, *Usud al-Ghābah*, II, 476-477.

⁶⁰⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 224.

held confidential meetings with him too but in vain. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān moved to the tall mountains of Mecca in dissidence during those same days. He died away between the years 53/673 – 55/675 due to unknown reasons. His corpse was brought down from the high mountains on shoulders and Ibn ‘Umar was one of those who carried his dead body.⁶⁰⁸ A shelter was fixed over ‘Abd al-Raḥmān’s grave. When Ibn ‘Umar saw this, he instructed to remove it saying that ‘only ‘Abd Raḥmān’s deeds are his shelter’.⁶⁰⁹

A significant incident related to Ibn ‘Umar that happened the same year was the death of Ziyād b. Abīhī/Abī Sufyān (d. 53/673). Ziyād was a half-brother to Mu‘āwiya from his father’s side and possessed excellent administrative skills. However, he took stringent measures in Iraq to strengthen Mu‘āwiya’s government. He wished that besides Iraq, Hijaz may also come under his domain. Since Medina is a part of Hijaz, hence the people here feared Ziyād’s prospective tyranny and went to Ibn ‘Umar in revulsion. As per historical sources Ibn ‘Umar cursed him and it is said that Ziyād died soon due to a mole (acne) in his hand.⁶¹⁰ This incident testifies the rise in Ibn ‘Umar’s esteem and stature that people approached him for supplication very much like a saint.

Many history books mention Ibn ‘Umar’s presence at ‘Ā’isha’s funeral in 58/678. Likewise, he was at the fore front at Abū Hurayra’s funeral prayer in 59/678. He sought for him God’s mercy and blessings and mentioned to the people Abū Hurayra’s quality of preserving the treasury of the prophetic traditions.⁶¹¹ He was also present at the funeral of Umm Salama, the last of the Prophet’s wives to die in 61/681.⁶¹² Apparently, this might be seen as an ordinary act but if we look at them closely, we see that Ibn ‘Umar’s presence in all these events creates two types of visibility; one is on the level of government and quite external and involuntary in nature. Whereas Ibn ‘Umar’s presence is voluntary and internal. Thus, it shows that although political power is in the hands of Mu‘āwiya, grassroot acceptance goes to Ibn ‘Umar and *ṣaḥābahs* like him. We witness a civil hegemony and alternative in the personality of Ibn ‘Umar during the absence of many companions in the time of Mu‘āwiya. In short, Ibn ‘Umar is now voice of the voiceless masses in the face of the political leaders.

⁶⁰⁸ al-Faswī, *al-Ma‘rifa wa al-Tārīkh*, I, 213.

⁶⁰⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 96-97.

⁶¹⁰ Ibid, VIII, 67-68; IV, 210.

⁶¹¹ Ibid, VIII, 16.

⁶¹² al-Faswī, *al-Ma‘rifa wa al-Tārīkh*, I, 215.

With the death of these religious and political personalities, Ibn 'Umar's role in society became more imperative. Later incidents also shed light on his public standing augmented from a significant companion to a *sine quo non* of the Muslim *umma*. One such opportunity came to Ibn 'Umar's way when 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir b. Kurayz (d. 58/678) was on his deathbed. He was a descendent of the Umayyads and remained a governor over Basra during the reign of 'Uthmān. He took possession of the treasury immediately after the assassination of 'Uthmān and brought it to Mecca whereupon he found 'Ā'isha, Ṭalḥa and al-Zubayr who had all decided to leave for Syria. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir convinced them to move to Basra and thus the battle of the Camel took place. 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir was a fortuneless man and earned riches during his governorship. He carried out many welfare projects at various places like digging wells, making canals, etc. During his last days, he called the pious personalities of Medina and inquired about his good deeds. Those present around him praised him but Ibn 'Umar kept quiet. When fewer people were around, 'Abd Allāh b. 'Āmir reiterated his question. Upon this, Ibn 'Umar replied 'If your earnings were rightful, then the spent amount shall increase manifold. When you land in the other world, you would get to know it yourself (إذا طابت المكسبة زكت النفقة، وسترد فترى)'.⁶¹³ As per some traditions, Ibn 'Umar added 'Didn't you know that illegal money does not cleanse one's misdeeds (أما علمت أن خبيثاً لن يكفر خبيثاً)'.⁶¹⁴ Thus, Ibn 'Umar's constructive efforts to ameliorate society did not stop.

Ibn 'Umar remained aloof from politics and empathized with people. His life pattern kept unvaried till his death. Rāfi' b. Khadij (d. 73/693) was a key companion and was about the same age as Ibn 'Umar. He died a little earlier than Ibn 'Umar. Ibn 'Umar, although an aged man himself shouldered (a post of) Rāfi' 's bier all the way to his final resting place. He bid farewell to Rāfi' in such a way that he prayed for him and sermonized people.⁶¹⁵

Ibn 'Umar shared grief of the people in different ways. He shouldered the funerals despite old age, led funerals procession and prayers at times, and addressed the gatherings on occasions with due permission of the deceased families. All this had a symbolic meaning. In other words, it showed people's acceptance and approval. Ibn 'Umar's presence gave them a feeling of moral

⁶¹³ al- Dīnawarī, *al-Ma'arīf*, 322.

⁶¹⁴ Muḥammad b. Aḥmad Ibn Rushd al-Qurṭubī, *al-Bayān wa al-Taḥṣīl wa al-Sharḥ wa al-Tawjīh wa al-Ta'līl fī Masā'il al-Mustakhrajah* [Commentary Based on the Mustakhraja, a treatise on Islamic Law and Jurisprudence by Muhammad al-'Utbi al-Qurtubi] (Beirut: Dār al-Gharb, 1988), XVIII, 582.

⁶¹⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 181-83.

strength and empowerment and allowed them to express their disapproval to the Umayyad authorities via his presence.

4.1.3 Ibn ‘Umar versus Mu‘āwiya’s Nomination of Yazīd

Through his nomination of Yazīd as successor-apparent on his deathbed, Mu‘āwiya (an Umayyad Caliph) could not play a role that could unite the Quraysh and the Muslim *ummah* like that of Imām Ḥasan (a Hashemite Caliph). This happened despite he had a long reign, ample time to think and repeated admonitions.

With the onset of the second decade, Mu‘āwiya had made up his mind to name Yazīd as his successor. During his visit to Medina circa 50/670, he met with Ibn ‘Abbās, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far, Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn al-Zubayr at his residence disregarding Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn. He talked to them about this transfer of power. He tried to show that he is politically correct and following the due procedure. ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far took up the matter that Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn had been bypassed. Others shared their viewpoints too. In the end, Ibn ‘Umar severely criticized the decision, saying:⁶¹⁶

This caliphate is not same as Heraclius’, nor Caesar’s and nor like Khosrow’s style of governance so that the progeny may inherit it from their parents. If it were like this, I would have won caliphate upon my father’s death. By God, I was precluded from the representative council of six permanent members by my father. There are no further conditions for caliphate than that the candidate be a venerable and meritorious Quraysh who is competent enough to take the burden of the caliphate. Moreover, Muslims accede to his govern-ship and that he should be the most pious and well favoured. (O Mu‘āwiya!) You intend to lend weight to a Qurayshī boy but verily be assured that this (son, Yazīd) shall be of no use in front of God (hereafter).⁶¹⁷

Ibn ‘Umar’s brief speech was a blend of criticism, admonition, lessons from jurisprudence, history, and prophecy for the future. He cited Heraclius, Caesar, and Khosrow’s examples before Mu‘āwiya and differentiated between caliphate and monarchy. The kingship is same as

⁶¹⁶ ‘Abd Allah b. Muslim Ibn Qutayba al-Dīnawārī, *al-Imāma wa al-Siyasa* [Imamate and Politics] (Beirut: Dār al-‘Adwā’, 1990), I, 194-95.

⁶¹⁷ Ibid; Aḥmad Zakī Ṣafwat, *Jamharat Khuṭab al-‘Arab* [The Collection of Speeches of the Arabs] (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d), II, 248.

a personal property and one of the progenies of an emperor inherits rulership, the way lands and other possessions of the deceased father are inherited. Ibn ‘Umar named Heraclius first in these examples as he was de facto an indirect ruler of Syria. Mu‘āwiya too had shifted his capital to Syria and now he had expressed his desire to pass on caliphate to his son as his birthright endowment.

Ibn ‘Umar had named precisely and categorically the criteria for the candidature of caliphate in light of Islamic principles. He explicated that caliphate is not to be won per force. On the contrary, a candidate should be characterized with some qualities. The Prophet himself named the condition of being a Quraysh. It was either a prediction by him or the sole viable solution in those peculiar circumstances, for the custodianship of the Ka‘ba in the hands of the Quraysh rendered them an authority to keep a political unison in the Arabian Peninsula (see subchapter 3.4.2).⁶¹⁸ Ibn ‘Umar mentioned that the candidate for the caliphate needs to be a well-acclaimed and meritorious person in the areas of knowledge, mannerism, and general conduct. His third and the most vital condition was the public approval. Hence, it may be seen that Ibn ‘Umar was offered caliphate several times, but he refused it on the same grounds saying, “I cannot accede to it without public consent”.⁶¹⁹

It might be that on this occasion Imām Ḥasan and Ḥusayn were intentionally left out of consideration as Mu‘āwiya was aware that his son was inferior to them religiously and politically. The conversation that took place among these four personalities and especially Ibn ‘Umar’s concluding note kept Mu‘āwiya at bay. Thus, he was put to say, ‘During the pre-Islamic days, Quraysh were led by Banū ‘Abd Manāf and both Ibn al-Zubayr and Ibn ‘Umar did not belong to this clan. This matter shall be resolved between us (the Umayyads) and Ibn ‘Abbās and ‘Abd Allāh b. Ja‘far (the Hashemites)’.⁶²⁰ Mu‘āwiya’s named efforts were not only against the Islamic principles but also against the tribal traditions. As per Arab custom, the rule remained either within the ruling tribe or to any of its branch, but it could not be directly inherited from father to son.⁶²¹

Here citing a *ḥadiīth* from *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim* in favour of Mu‘āwiya would not be out of place. Once the Prophet called Mu‘āwiya, but he was taking his meal. Later twice with intervals did the

⁶¹⁸ Some scholars opine that the Prophet used this term to mean senior early converts of the Quraysh [see: Ṭāhā Ḥusayn, *al-Fitnah al-Kubrā*, 63.].

⁶¹⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 316.

⁶²⁰ Ibn Qutayba, *al-Imāma*, I, 195-96.

⁶²¹ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 136-39.

Prophet call him, but he remained busy in eating. Upon this the Prophet said: ‘May he never have his fill’.⁶²² Some scholars have interpreted the Prophet’s saying as a supplication that: ‘May Allāh not give him his fill and thus he might not be amongst the hungry on the Day of Judgment’.⁶²³ Likewise, Imām al-Bayhaqī includes the above cited tradition in the prophecies made by the Prophet in his book *Dalā’il al-Nubuwwah*.⁶²⁴ Similarly, it is also claimed that the Prophet’s prayer was answered as he used to eat seven times a day and yet did not have his fill.⁶²⁵ This tradition has also been corroborated against Mu‘āwiya and thus has a mixed interpretation (in favour or against him) making it controversial amongst the Sunnites and the Shiites.

This tradition may be interpreted in another way with short background information. After twenty years of Syria’s governorship, Mu‘āwiya remained at loggerheads with ‘Alī for about five years causing the first wave of *fitan* and many battles. Then again after twenty years of caliphate, he nominated his son as the next ruler causing the second wave of *fitan* and many battles again. He deserves due praise for his key achievements made during his governorship and caliphate, but mistakes should not be ignored either. Both Sunnites and Shiites agree that Mu‘āwiya’s stance was erroneous on both the occasions (see subchapter 6.2). In all likelihood, the Prophet’s prayer for Mu‘āwiya’s excessive appetite in the above mentioned *ḥadīth* hinted that after two decades of governorship and two decades of rulership, Mu‘āwiya would ‘wish’ to sustain his rule through his son even after his death.

A significant incident that happened during Mu‘āwiya’s life was that the death of Imām Ḥasan (d. between 49/669 and 51/670) who had bequeathed that his burial place may be close to the Prophet subject to ‘Ā’isha’s permission. At that time, Marwān, the Umayyad governor in Medina posed obstacles in fulfillment of his last will though ‘Ā’isha had acceded to it. Consequently, a dispute arose between Imām Ḥusayn and the Umayyad government. On this occasion, Ibn ‘Umar was in the forefront to abate the dispute and persuaded Imām to give up his claim.⁶²⁶ This incident reveals a lot regarding the treatment of the Hashemites by the ruling Umayyads. It is also likely that for a sensitive member of this clan (i.e., Imām Ḥusayn), such an abrasive treatment made life unbearable in Medina.

⁶²² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2604.

⁶²³ al-Ṭayālīsī, *al-Musnad*, no. 2869.

⁶²⁴ al-Bayhaqī, *Dalā’il al-Nubūwah*, VI, 342.

⁶²⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI, 189.

⁶²⁶ *Ibid*, VIII, 47-48.

After the death of Imām Ḥasan, Mu‘āwiya expedited his efforts for smooth transition of caliphate to Yazīd. First and foremost, he ousted those people who stood by ‘Alī against him. He even mentioned this to his son that he had removed all the hardened adversaries except for a few, namely Imām Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr, Ibn ‘Umar and ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr.⁶²⁷ A distinct personality amongst these was Ḥujr b. ‘Adī (d. 51/660) who some reports refer to as a companion of the Prophet whereas others consider him a Tābi‘ī (successor). Despite that Ḥujr b. ‘Adī had played a significant role in the Islamic conquests, Mu‘āwiya probably took him to be a tough rival and anticipated that just as Ḥujr had opposed him against ‘Alī, he would oppose Yazīd too. Therefore, he had him assassinated along with his companions in 51/660. When Ibn ‘Umar learnt about this, it was like a shock for him, and he started weeping.⁶²⁸

When Mu‘āwiya’s end drew nearer, he tried to enforce allegiance in favour of Yazīd. The situation became as tense as it had become at the time of Mu‘āwiya’s refusal to pay allegiance to ‘Alī. On this crucial time, Ibn ‘Umar not only tried to dissuade Mu‘āwiya from taking this controversial decision but he also tried to calm down people from show of violence.

During these days, a delegate of the companions met Mu‘āwiyah and offered him some practical and viable options that may stop bloodshed. Although, Ibn al-Zubayr (another member of the delegate) leads the discussion, however, it may be noted that Ibn ‘Umar is known for similar thoughts. Three options were floated, i.e., to follow the conduct of the Prophet and leave the matter to his companions; to appoint anyone outside his family and clan as was practiced by Abū Bakr; or to nominate a council (*shūrā*) of sagacious men known for their piety as was done by ‘Umar.⁶²⁹

On the same issue, Mu‘āwiya had a one-on-one meeting with Ibn ‘Umar and told him that he had named his successor to avert any conflict amongst the Muslims and that he should not make chaos. Ibn ‘Umar replied that there had been caliphs before Mu‘āwiya whose sons were more competent than his, but they never tried to impose what Mu‘āwiya had. Regarding himself, Ibn ‘Umar said that he would submit to whoever would be selected as the next caliph with general consensus of the Muslims even if the selected one is a handicapped. Besides Ibn ‘Umar, Mu‘āwiya held individual meetings with other influential companions like Ibn al-Zubayr, ‘Abd

⁶²⁷ al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 226; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 322; Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-'Umam* [The Experiences of the Nations – A History from the Deluge down to 369/979] (Tehran: Soroush, 2000), II, 37-3.

⁶²⁸ This issue was also raised by ‘Ā’isha to Mu‘āwiya. See: Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 60.

⁶²⁹ Khalīfah, *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 213-17.

al- Raḥmān b. Abī Bakr and the like to convince them, but all of them unanimously tried to desist and warned him.⁶³⁰ Mu‘āwiya found Ibn ‘Umar to be of more compliant and accommodating nature than others.⁶³¹ But nothing could stop Mu‘āwiya from his decision.

It becomes clear from the individual and group meetings that mentally and intellectually there was a gap between the *sābiqūn* minded companions (like Ibn ‘Umar and others) and Mu‘āwiya and his accomplices (i.e., tribalistic minded group). *Al-sābiqūn* camp believed caliphate to be a collective issue that could only be resolved successfully when a decision is reached with consensus (council). On the contrary, Mu‘āwiya had spent initial twenty-five years of life in Mecca amidst the adversaries of Islam and embraced Islam around 9/630. He did not spend much time in the companionship of the Prophet as he passed away in 11/632. Then in Abū Bakr’s reign, he was mainly pre-occupied with his brother Yazīd b. Abī Sufyān in the battles to crush rebellion and later his governorship in Syria for the next two decades (21/661 – 40/661) culminating to his own accession for the next two decades (41/661 – 60/680). All this did not give him much time to win scholarly supereminence in Islam that was attained by other companions. Probably, the way his forty-years-long stay in Syria had polished Mu‘āwiya’s political acumen, the locally prevalent pattern of hereditary monarchy also influenced him on the issue of transfer of power to his son, Yazīd.

The above discussion between Ibn ‘Umar and Mu‘āwiya reveals that Ibn ‘Umar believed Mu‘āwiya should not have legally crowned Yazīd who was less meritorious than many contemporaries. However, Ibn ‘Umar’s approach was to stop bloodshed and if the public chose someone less capable of others, he shall readily submit to him. In other words, Ibn ‘Umar is not interested in the selection of Yazīd or anyone else and more interested in the stability of the Muslim community and wants smooth transition rather than fights.

On one occasion, Ibn ‘Umar was offered money in return for his support to Yazīd.⁶³² He declined the offer saying: ‘these people believe that our religion has very little worth in our hearts’.⁶³³ This reply shows that Ibn ‘Umar deemed the oath of allegiance or political support a critically vital and an accountable matter. He served the community without any public remuneration and contributed immensely for the betterment in education and training of people.

⁶³⁰ Ibid, 213-14.

⁶³¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 86.

⁶³² Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 99.

⁶³³ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 315; al-Bayhaqī, *al-Sunan al-Kubrā*, no. 16632.

He felt that the government should provide for the amenities of life of such philanthropists in society to enable them to make both ends meet. Thus, he generally accepted gifts from the rulers. Here, his refusal to accept the gifts was very unusual that hinted at multiple things simultaneously. For instance, he may have felt that there were improper intentions behind this offer and the amount was not given as a recompense to his services. Most probably, he considered that political support should mainly be based upon principles and must not be sold for any monetary benefit or designation. Similarly, the rulers should not use state treasury or public money for personal motives.

When Mu'āwiya failed to garner the required support from Ibn 'Umar, he tried to intimidate him by serving life threats through his son, 'Abd Allāh that he had to withdraw owing to the pressure from prominent political figures like 'Abd Allāh b. Ṣafwān (d. 73/692). Ibn 'Umar's reaction was not aggressive, rather he is said to have remained patient in the sanctuary of Allāh. Some sources say that he wept.⁶³⁴ These should be the tears of despair and not of fear as he had spent a major part of his life in soldiery and battles.

It is reported that Mu'āwiya made an abortive attempt to win over the oath of allegiance from the prominent members of the above-mentioned delegation from Medina in another gathering. He took the *bay'ah* (oath of allegiance) from the public waiting outside deceitfully by telling them that the elite had already acceded to it.⁶³⁵

4.1.4 Mu'āwiya's Reaction to Ibn 'Umar's Position

Ibn 'Umar was one of the four personalities who Mu'āwiya was afraid of against his son (see subchapter 4.1.3). When he could not win Ibn 'Umar's support for Yazīd through lucrative offers or coercive measures, he fell to baser claims like making propaganda against his personality. These comments were made on different occasions before different persons that makes it an interesting topic.

The first comment was made before 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far⁶³⁶ in these words, 'I have heard that Ibn 'Umar intends to contest for caliphate himself whereas he has three such qualities that are not congenial to a caliph. He is *ghayūr* (jealous/proud), *'ayiy* (dumb) and *bakhīl* (stingy).' When this reached Ibn 'Umar's ears, he responded, '(Mu'āwiya) called me proud/jealous

⁶³⁴ Khalīfah, *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 214; Ibn al-'Arabī, *al-'Awāsim*, 218; Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 183.

⁶³⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 150-152; Khalīfah, *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 216.

⁶³⁶ He was also part of the four-member committee that held a meeting with Mu'āwiya (see subchapter 4.1.3).

(*ghayūr*) as I used to keep my household inside and it is none of anyone else business what is going on inside the premises of my house. As far as my taciturnity is concerned, I was counted amongst the scholars of the Qur'ān and there is no match for its rhetoric on Earth. As far as my stinginess was mentioned, I distributed all gifts amongst the needy. Hence, why should someone need what I inherited from my father?' When 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far reported Ibn 'Umar's reply to Mu'āwiya, he took an oath from him that he would not let a third person hear it.⁶³⁷

The above-cited allegations against Ibn 'Umar seem to be a reaction of the brief speech (refer to subchapter 4.1.2) in which Ibn 'Umar clarified the difference between monarchy and caliphate, the pre-requisites for a caliph in Islam, his reproachful mention of Yazīd as an inexperienced Qurayshī youngster and his mention that Yazīd would be of no help to Mu'āwiya on the Day of Judgement. Mu'āwiya was tongue-tied and awe-struck in response.

The objection of being *pride/jealous* is quite incomprehensible. However, Ibn 'Umar's response that he had kept his household which may mean that he had kept himself and his family members strictly away from any political contention. Ibn 'Umar further clarified that no one should comment on the internal affairs of his household. There is another possibility. When Mu'āwiya tried to get Ibn 'Umar's support in his campaigns against 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar reproached him (through his letters) and also his messenger 'Amr b. al-Āṣ. This might have given him a feeling as if Ibn 'Umar is proud of his early conversion to Islam.

In response to the allegation on his taciturnity, Ibn 'Umar referred to the Qur'ān to allude that the longwinded speeches made to win the worldly riches and prestige are not commendable. Contrarily, eloquence may be judged in the ability to sum up a sea of wisdom and meaning. Likewise, how one could be alleged for being tight-fisted who is on his feet to disburse the endowments and gifts the moment he receives them.

In a nutshell, these allegations were raised merely for the sake of Ibn 'Umar's character assassination. It may be testified from the fact 'Abd Allāh b. Ja'far was immediately sworn in by Mu'āwiya not to share Ibn 'Umar's words with anyone else. Mu'āwiya's action reveals that his allegations were baseless whereas Ibn 'Umar's cogent response further elevated his moral excellence. Herein lies a sharp contrast between a politically oriented companion and ethico-religiously minded person. Thus, it is quite difficult for each to understand the other because their priorities are different.

⁶³⁷ al-Faswī, *al-Ma'rifa wa al-Tārīkh*, I, 492.

Mu'āwiya's second comment was made when he was on his deathbed and his son Yazīd had not seen him yet. He said this before al-Ḍaḥḥāk b. Qays (d. 64/684) as his last words for Yazīd, '(Ibn 'Umar's) acquiescence is owing to his overt devotion in worship. Neither is he desirous of the caliphate except that caliphate comes to him freely'.⁶³⁸ This comment implies that Mu'āwiya thought of Ibn 'Umar a strong competitor however he mentioned his attribute of zestful devotion as a weakness. Surprisingly, the Prophet's interpretation of Ibn 'Umar's teenage dream and subsequent advice to stay awake and worship during nights⁶³⁹ (see subchapter 2.1.2 and 3.3.2) was probably to control the negative emotions (like greed, avarice, prejudice, tall hopes etc.) and nurture superior merits (like piety, empathy, commitment, selflessness, benevolence, high morals, etc.). Such a person discerns between right and wrong, justice and injustice and inhibits himself from ruthless killing and committing deeds of cruelty even to one's deadly enemies. Such peaceful disposition and diligence were deemed as merits amongst those in power in early Islamic history but turned into demerits after the end of the Rashidun caliphate as the governance inclined to tribalism. Likewise, 'not being desirous of caliphate' is a superior merit from Islamic perspective in contrast to tribalistic point of view. A pious person may not aspire for caliphate as it is a heavy responsibility which people may confer to anyone out of their free accord.

Mu'āwiya's next two comments may belong to that time when Yazīd had finally reached. The first comment was, 'Ibn 'Umar has been emasculated by his profuse worship. When (everyone else will have sworn in your favour and) he is left alone, he shall pay you allegiance on his own'.⁶⁴⁰ This apparently pejorative remark bespeaks of Ibn 'Umar's high-principled stance. Ibn 'Umar was not personally desirous of the caliphate. Likewise, in case of more than one contestant, he never took his oath of allegiance till the masses supported one of them in great majority.

While advising his son Yazīd on another occasion, Mu'āwiya said, 'Ibn 'Umar is a truthful person, however, he is intimidated by people, devoted to worship and a loner. He has segregated himself from the world and seeks nothing from it. His business in this world is the same as was his father's. Convey him my good wishes and take good care of him with bounteous endowments'.⁶⁴¹ Whatsoever Mu'āwiya meant with his mention of 'being intimidated by

⁶³⁸ al-Dīnawarī, *al-Akhbār al-Ṭiwāl*, 226.

⁶³⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3738-3740, 1121; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 6057-58.

⁶⁴⁰ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 322; Miskawayh, *Tajārib al-'Umam*, II, 37.

⁶⁴¹ Ibn al-A'tham, *al-Futūḥ*, IV, 349-50.

people' but the astounding number of Ibn 'Umar's teachers and students, his cooperative efforts with the Rashidun caliphs and other social incursions do not conform to his image of an introvert engrossed in worship day and night in isolation. It might be that he had kept his distance from government offices and political contest or remained aloof from a particular group of people. This may further be elucidated from an anecdote wherein Ibn 'Umar stated, 'Were Mu'āwiya not in Syria, I would have come to Jerusalem; assume *iḥrām* and then return to perform 'umra'. He detested coming all the way to Syria and not seeing Mu'āwiya so that he might develop a grudge for him. If he had met him, Mu'āwiya would have thought that he sought favours.⁶⁴² Whatsoever Mu'āwiya had in his mind when he mentioned the expression 'bounteous endowments' but neither Ibn 'Umar besought favours from anyone nor did he refuse anyone's gift in accordance with the teachings of the Prophet.

It may be reiterated that Mu'āwiya's profuse comments were in the context of the caliphate and Ibn 'Umar's curt response in this regard had left a deep impact on him. He felt subconsciously that there was no other such balanced personality around who could not only easily win public approval from rival provinces Syria and Iraq but was also entrusted by the Companions. Thus, a peaceful transfer of power was possible. It seems likely that Mu'āwiya was under political pressure from various sides at that time. The inconsistency in his appraisal of Ibn 'Umar's personality belies the fact that he could not lay his finger on one solid weakness that may give an edge to his son Yazīd over Ibn 'Umar and a sound pretext for handing him over the caliphate.

It is worth mentioning here that Ibn 'Umar's name popped up frequently as the best possible candidate for the caliphate, because people trusted him. His name appeared after the assassination of 'Uthman (see subchapter 3.2.1).⁶⁴³ When 'Alī became Caliph, he offered Ibn 'Umar the governorship of Damascus.⁶⁴⁴ Mu'āwiya must not have been happy with this although Ibn 'Umar did not accept it (see subchapter 3.2.1). Even during the arbitration (*tahkīm*) process between Mu'āwiya and 'Alī, Ibn 'Umar's name surfaced as a potential caliph, but he did not accept (see subchapter 3.2.2). People like Mu'āwiya knew his status very well and tried to belittle him whenever found any occasion.

Though Ibn 'Umar himself was a strong candidate for caliphate on account of his: seniority in Islam, kinship with the Prophet, as a son of an ex-caliph, preeminence, experience, and all, but

⁶⁴²al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 320.

⁶⁴³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 432.

⁶⁴⁴ Ibid, V, 463, IV, 314; Ibn 'Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XXXI, 181.

he did not get influenced by the then state of affairs. It seems as if he knew very well how to deal with himself and his subordinates, the then ruler (Mu‘āwiva) and his opponents simultaneously and most of all how to carry himself in public. On this critical juncture, Ibn ‘Umar opted for a multi-dimensional approach. He was not carried away by emotions and treated Mu‘āwiva respectfully. He avoided to comment on his politics in public and severely criticized on it in his presence that shows he could differentiate political censure from propaganda (see subchapter 4.1.3). This was more so as in a tribal society where any invective against a ruler could turn into a volatile propaganda leading to a possible assassination like that of ‘Uthman.

4.2 The Reigns of Yazīd and Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd

Though the four-year reign of Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiya was short but proved to be a root cause of all clashes and disturbance. During this period, two parallel states (Yazīd and Ibn al-Zubayr) surfaced very much like ‘Alī’s era and many wars took place. With the rise in the incidents of unrest, Ibn ‘Umar’s efforts to restore peace further increased.

This subchapter shall deal with this reign in three sections: Section one studies Yazīd’s nomination till revolt against him, section two discusses Ibn ‘Umar’s efforts to stop Imām Ḥusayn from going to Kufa, while section three argues Ibn ‘Umar’s perspective of pledging allegiance to Yazīd. Because the reign of Mu‘āwiya II (son of Yazīd’s son) was not only brief but devoid of any significant happenings, therefore, it has been touched upon briefly as a fourth section of this subchapter.

4.2.1 Succession and Revolt

The way Prophet Muhammad was a trendsetter in Arabia who deeply influenced all spheres, Mu‘āwiya too started new trends in politics.⁶⁴⁵ The future caliphates (Marwanids and Abbasids) followed his footsteps in many respects like tribal style of governance, gaining power per force instead mutual consultation, transfer of rule to the successive heirs (as in monarchy) and introduction of many institutions of ancient Byzantine establishment into the new Islamic government and the like.

⁶⁴⁵ Khan, Waḥiduddin, “Khurūj kā Mas’ala [The Problem of Rebellion]”, *al-Risala*, (Delhi: Goodwords, February, 2019), 35.

After Mu‘āwiya’s death, the residents of Kufa gathered in the house of a companion, Sulaymān b. Surad (d. 65/685) and everyone agreed to hand over caliphate to Imām Ḥusayn.⁶⁴⁶ Yazīd was opposed for his incompetence in rulership by prominent personalities and a movement to overthrow him began. Letters promising the allegiance oath were received to Imām Ḥusayn from Kufa which culminated in his martyrdom in 61/680.⁶⁴⁷ Later, the people of Hijaz pledged loyalty to Ibn al-Zubayr. The Syrian government attacked Medina to crush this move and killed hundreds of people.⁶⁴⁸ Then they turned to Mecca where the same kill order was being repeated when the news of Yazīd’s death reached.⁶⁴⁹ Thus, Yazīd adopted the same tribalistic pattern that had been exercised by his father Mu‘āwiya in his opposition to ‘Alī. As very few tribal elders from the Quraysh were in favour of attacks on Mecca and Medina, a new phenomenon may be seen in Yazīd’s employment of those forces to crush his opponents which were already hostile to the people of Hijaz and Quraysh.⁶⁵⁰

Ibn ‘Umar’s positive role continued during the era of Yazīd. When Mu‘āwiya did not change his decision, Ibn ‘Umar moderated his aversion to keep the general peace intact and showed patience.⁶⁵¹ His gesture bespeaks of his apprehensions that the tumult and furor raised against ‘Alī by Mu‘āwiya may not be repeated. Therefore, when Yazīd was sworn in, Ibn ‘Umar said about himself ‘If Yazīd proves to be a good ruler, we would be thankful. If he turns out to be a bad ruler, we will persevere’ (see also subchapter 4.2.3 on Ibn ‘Umar’s position on Yazīd).⁶⁵²

After securing the oath of allegiance in Syria, Yazīd wrote to the governor of Medina, Walīd b. ‘Utba, an Umayyad, (d. 64/684) either to procure support immediately from Imām Ḥusayn, Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn al-Zubayr or they would be put to death. Walīd replied in these words: “I do not think that Ibn ‘Umar would prefer bloodshed nor would he like to rule except in the case that it is delegated to him (by the public) spontaneously”.⁶⁵³ Indeed, this comment seems to sum up Ibn ‘Umar’s viewpoint regarding caliphate. He viewed caliphate a public office for a well-favored person. It was a prerogative of the public to choose their leader and not vice versa.

⁶⁴⁶ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 352; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V, 27.

⁶⁴⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3110.

⁶⁴⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 482-495.

⁶⁴⁹ *Ibid*, V, 496-501

⁶⁵⁰ *Ibid*, V, 495

⁶⁵¹ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 150.

⁶⁵² *Ibid*, IV, 150.

⁶⁵³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 338-39.

Ibn ‘Umar was not present in Medina when Yazīd was sworn in. On his return, he initially did not conform to Yazīd’s authority but later when he managed to relegate support from majority of the provinces, he took the oath too.⁶⁵⁴ Whenever there were more than one candidate for the caliphate, Ibn ‘Umar would not take his oath till one of them had won a clear dominance.

4.2.3 Ibn ‘Umar on Yazīd’s Caliphate

Ibn ‘Umar was also concerned about the lesser capabilities of Yazīd. He weighed that comparatively the repercussions on ousting Yazīd were graver than retaining his rulership. While addressing a gathering, Ibn ‘Umar elucidated this point thus:

You deem Yazīd b. Mu‘āwiyā not a suitable person for caliphate amongst the *ummah*: a person who neither has acumen nor candour? I agree with you on this, but by God the unison amongst the *ummah* is dearer to me than discord and rift amongst the Muslims. Is there a door through which the *ummah* entered and the door did not fall short of capacity? How come then this passage has shrunk so much so to accommodate a single person? What do you say if every single individual of the *ummah* vows neither to kill nor to plunder his fellow Muslim then would it be possible? The people replied in affirmative. Upon this Ibn ‘Umar stated that he too was trying to tell them the same. He then quoted the Prophet’s words saying, ‘Shyness (*ḥayā*) does not bring anything except good.’⁶⁵⁵

The above cited incident testifies to the immense social pressure on Ibn ‘Umar in the times of *fitan* so much that he had to clarify his viewpoint. He first made clear that he agrees with the opinion of Yazīd’s adversaries on his lack of qualification for ascension. However, he differed with them on resorting to violent means for ousting him. He added that to put up with a person of inferior merits in order to maintain unity in the *ummah* is better than volatile discord amongst the masses. Thus, his guiding principle was to go for an outstandingly meritorious person in ideal situation, but when a crisis called for provisional measures then a less able person was acceptable temporarily to keep law and order. He believed in either grooming this mediocre or to make efforts to replace him peacefully with a meritorious person. (This shall further be elucidated later in chapter five). One may conjecture that Ibn ‘Umar might be mindful of ‘Umar, his father’s saying that the wise is not the one who differentiates between good and evil, but the

⁶⁵⁴ Ibid, V, 343.

⁶⁵⁵ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-‘Awāṣim*, 225-26.s

one who may cipher the lesser of the two vices.⁶⁵⁶

In the above-cited speech, ‘entrance through a door’ has been used as a metaphor for taking the oath of allegiance. It means how come the same *bay‘ah* that was made by a majority could be improper for him. He elaborated further that Yazīd was able to garner massive support as no one wished to segregate the *ummah* and pose threat to the lives and property of other Muslims. Thus, not only had he done the same but had advised others to upkeep harmony by toeing the line with the majority.

The mention of taking life or confiscating property in the context of *bay‘ah* is noteworthy. Ibn ‘Umar was probably referring to the wars that Mu‘āwiya fought against ‘Alī. The battle of Şiffin and then attacks on those areas which lay under ‘Alī’s jurisdiction resulted in bloodshed and plunder (see subchapter 3.2.3).

Ibn ‘Umar was of the view that strict Islamic law should be followed, however, if the hostile camp is not willing to abide by, then acceding to the authority of a lesser ruler is not a high price to preserve peace and secure people’s lives and property. Hence, Ibn ‘Umar is found to take up the issue in a broad minded, holistic way whereas the opponents of Yazīd considered the matter too narrowly and wished to dismiss him at any cost. Ibn ‘Umar’s far sighted approach foresaw the friction and the subsequent losses that could result on his forced dismissal and feared recurrence of past tragic incidents.

At the end of his brief speech, Ibn ‘Umar referred to the saying of the Prophet ‘Shyness (*ḥayā*) does not bring except good’. Here, Ibn ‘Umar gave justification of another allegation upon him that politically and religiously, he was competent enough to claim the caliphate, but he abstained from it. Ibn ‘Umar felt ashamed to speak of himself as a rightful candidate for the caliphate; make a separate group; then kill his opponents for personal reasons and rob them off their belongings. On the contrary, he took caliphate as a public office and felt that it was the prerogative of the masses to choose their leader. It is possible that from *shyness* Ibn ‘Umar may have been hinting at his shy nature that has been discussed in subchapter 2.1.2.

4.2.2 Ibn ‘Umar and Imām Ḥusayn

Beyond his person, Ibn ‘Umar strictly warned those upon whom his influence prevailed, e.g., family members and freed slaves, etc. He advised them not to take sides with any mutinous

⁶⁵⁶ Aḥmad b. Muḥammad Ibn ‘Abd Rabbih al-Andalusī, *al-‘Iqd al-Farīd* [The Unique Necklace] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1984), II, 109.

elements. He made it clear that if any of them revolted, Ibn ‘Umar shall sever all relations with him.⁶⁵⁷ While those over whom Ibn ‘Umar had no authority and they were actively involved in the revolt against Yazīd, he tried to dissuade them. In this regard, historical records mention his meetings with different important figures and his advice to them.

Ibn ‘Umar advised Ibn al-Zubayr and Imām Ḥusayn to “fear God and not create any schism among people”.⁶⁵⁸ The dialogue cited in these sources shows that this whole discussion did not take place at any single meeting. On the contrary, it implies Ibn ‘Umar’s multiple consistent efforts. One of the dialogues took place on his return to Medina from Mecca and he advised both Imām Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr to stop becoming the starting point of division in the *ummah*. During Ibn ‘Umar’s second dialogue with Imām Ḥusayn, Ibn al-Zubayr was also in attendance. On this occasion Ibn ‘Umar expounded his point of view further. He is recorded to have said: “I remind you (two) of God to return and take allegiance for the sake of the public interest. You (two) should wait and see if people agree on supporting Yazīd or not. If they do, then don’t disagree from what others do. However, if they do not, then it would be what you two want”.⁶⁵⁹

This was again a sound proposition. Ibn ‘Umar considered caliphate a public office and held common consent a minimum prerequisite for it. He suggested to Imām Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr that if Yazīd won public approval, in that case they should give preference to the public opinion over their own. He further added that it was too early to oppose Yazīd as public consensus for or against him had not yet developed. Hence, at least they should have a wait and watch policy at this crucial time as dissension may overthrow Yazīd from caliphate eventually fulfilling their (Imām Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr’s) desire.

When Imām Ḥusayn decided to pursue his journey, Ibn ‘Umar met him on his way to Kufa and requested him to exercise restraint, reminded him of the events that had happened to his father and brother therein and to learn a lesson from it. Ibn ‘Umar wished to escort Imām Ḥusayn back to Medina. He alluded to the history of his grandfather (the Prophet), the honour and venerable status he enjoyed in the city of his grandfather that might not be the same in other places. Ibn ‘Umar spoke in these words: “Do not go away from your native place and the sanctuary of your maternal grandfather, the Messenger of Allāh ...”.⁶⁶⁰

⁶⁵⁷ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 238.

⁶⁵⁸ Ibid, V, 343.

⁶⁵⁹ Ibid, VIII, 163.

⁶⁶⁰ Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V, 25-26.

The reference to his brother and father is very significant. This means disloyalty of the people of Iraq with both the personalities. His father ‘Alī was given a tough time by Iraqis during his caliphate to the extent that he was assassinated there. Likewise, Imām Ḥasan faced the same turbulent situation. It is also possible that Ibn ‘Umar obliquely referred to the Prophet’s prophecy regarding Imām Ḥasan that he would vacate caliphate to buy accord and unison.⁶⁶¹

Ibn ‘Umar acknowledged that Imām Ḥusayn’s stance was not wrong, but that the opponents were stronger and more powerful⁶⁶² and provoking the adversaries did not seem a sound decision. His counsel to Imām presents him as a rationalist. It seems that for his old age he could read the events better than many people present around him. His advice was not only based on his religious conviction or love of peace among Muslims but also on real experiences that he had witnessed during the Prophet’s lifetime, the reigns of the four caliphs and the Umayyad dynasty.

Ibn ‘Umar added if Imām deemed it improper to pay allegiance to Yazīd, he need not to till his heart’s satisfaction, however, he should stay at his residence in Medina. Ibn ‘Umar further communicated that presently Imām may have lacked in material resources but enjoyed higher moral status. Therefore, if he showed a little forbearance, divine scheme might be unfolded such that Yazīd might not live for long and God Himself suffice for Imām against Yazīd.⁶⁶³

When Imām Ḥusayn still insisted, Ibn ‘Umar retold that God gave a choice to the Prophet between this world and the Hereafter. The Prophet chose the latter.⁶⁶⁴ With this Ibn ‘Umar reminded Imām that he was a part of the Prophet and shall not gain any political supremacy as it equates to the worldly gains which were not opted by the Prophet.⁶⁶⁵ When Imām did not agree to return, Ibn ‘Umar said farewell to him in these words ‘May Allāh protect you from being put to death’.⁶⁶⁶ This shows Ibn ‘Umar’s excellence and deep understanding in *ḥadīth*, *sīrah* and *tārīkh* (see subchapter 2.6 for Ibn ‘Umar’s scholarship).

Ibn ‘Umar’s dialogue with Imām Ḥusayn is very important. Although he was not directly involved in politics, he was aware of everything going on around him. Because of his wisdom, experience, and farsightedness, he understood what would happen if Imām Husayn did not

⁶⁶¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, No. 3935.

⁶⁶² Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V, 25.

⁶⁶³ *Ibid*, V, 25-26.

⁶⁶⁴ As is mentioned in a *ḥadīth* in: *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 466, 3654; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2382.

⁶⁶⁵ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, no. 6968; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI, 259.

⁶⁶⁶ Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V,25; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI, 259, VIII, 173-175.

return to Medina and eventually that happened what Ibn ‘Umar had foretold. Ibn ‘Umar’s reading of the events is in line with his theological confession and an insight as if he was able to foresee the consequence of these events.

The latter dialogue is completely different stylistically and clearly give away the vibes that in the first two ones when Ibn al-Zubayr was in attendance. Since only Imām Ḥusayn was being addressed in the third dialogue, hence the selection of words, expressions and style reveal Ibn ‘Umar’s reverence for the household of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*). He, reading through theological lenses, used the expression of ‘a charming countenance (*al-ḥasan al-jamīl*)’ for Imām’s physical graces and ‘chastity and the finest part of the Prophet’ (*ṭahārah, ṣafwah min rasūl Allāh*) for his inward magnificence.⁶⁶⁷

A view of Ibn ‘Umar’s multiple efforts to restrain Imām Ḥusayn gives the impression that he did whatever he could do. He held meetings with him while he was on his way to Medina and Kufa. He alluded to his family: his maternal grandfather (the Prophet), his father (‘Alī) and brother (Imām Ḥasan) to convince him. He elaborated on his blood relationship and family ties with Islam and the Prophet. He entreated him not to leave Medina as it was home (*ḥaram*) to the Prophet and Imām’s birthplace. Ibn ‘Umar tried to convey that there were options other than refusing Yazīd’s allegiance oath and leaving Medina. For instance, he suggested Imām to make his stay inside Medina without taking allegiance till a situation arises that either Yazīd wins his heart’s satisfaction, or some divine scheme proclaims his death. Ibn ‘Umar exhausted all possible rational arguments and spiritual counsels to forfend Imām and when he did not defer his journey, Ibn ‘Umar wept bitterly⁶⁶⁸ as if he had anticipated what would happen.

Later, Ibn ‘Umar would often reminisce about these days and say, ‘The Prophet considered both Ḥasan and Ḥusayn as the sweet basils.’ Ibn ‘Umar used to say: ‘I swore him to return but he did not agree. Surely, Imām was heading towards the place where he had seen maltreatment to his father (‘Alī) and elder brother (Ḥasan). It contained a lesson for him’.⁶⁶⁹ The tragedy remained fresh in his memory till death. Once an Iraqi asked about killing of a fly in *Iḥrām* and the impurity of its blood on clothes. Ibn ‘Umar replied: ‘The people of Iraq ask about killing of a fly whereas they have caused killing of the Prophet’s grandchild...’⁶⁷⁰

⁶⁶⁷ Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V, 25.

⁶⁶⁸ Ibid, V, 26.

⁶⁶⁹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, I, 444; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, no. 1566, XIV, 111.

⁶⁷⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3935.

Ibn ‘Umar viewed that the major onus of the Prophet’s household lay in serving the field of faith and not the political arena. Instead of wasting energies in the wriggly business of politics, they should work to uplift people spirituality and morally. By taking part in the murky field of politics, their opponents would not hesitate to assault their lives, property, or honour. In response, they shall have to indulge into such mean acts that may be harmful to their morals, faith, and afterlife. Therefore, they should devote their knowledge, time, and actions for the sake of God’s religion. It will help them not only rule over the hearts of people but also win more favour before Lord. It was probably this reason that Ibn ‘Umar chose such a path for himself too.

Ibn ‘Umar also made efforts to stop the authorities from any show of aggression or violence. He wrote a letter to Yazīd to express his dissension over the martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn. In this letter his sentence ‘no day is (as gruesome) as the day of the martyrdom of Ḥusayn’ reveals his deep respect for the intimate clan of the Prophet.⁶⁷¹

Besides Imām Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Zubayr, Ibn ‘Umar also tried to stop ‘Abd Allāh ibn Ḥanzala (d. 63/683) and Ibn Muṭī‘ (d. 73/629) who were lobbying against Yazīd. In revolt, the people of Medina had named Ibn Muṭī‘ as the leader of the Quraysh and Ibn Ḥanzala as the head of the *anṣār*. Once Ibn Muṭī‘ was trying to convince Muhammad b. Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700), son of ‘Alī, that Ibn ‘Umar also reached there. Ibn Muṭī‘ asked Ibn ‘Umar to be seated. His reply was that he had not come there to sit rather to remind them of a prophetic tradition, ‘Whosoever pulls out his hand from obedience (to a ruler) will find no justification (in his defense) before God on the Day of Judgment, and one who dies without having bound himself by an oath of allegiance will die the death of the days of *jāhilliyya*.’⁶⁷²

The personalities mentioned above: Imām Ḥusayn (Banū Hāshim), Ibn al-Zubayr (Banū Asad), Ibn Muṭī‘ (Banū ‘Adī) and Ibn Ḥanzala (Banū Aws, *anṣārī*) were prominent figures and the descendants of the great companions. They had support only from their tribes, while their opponents, the Umayyads, held the power of the state's organized army. This was the third time, Ibn ‘Umar was trying to stop rebellion, first against ‘Uthmān, then against ‘Alī and now against Yazīd. This shows that he did what he could to promote peace and strengthen political stability.

⁶⁷¹ Muḥammad Bāqir al-Majlisī, *Biḥār al-Anwār* [Oceans of Light] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Wafā’, n.d), XLV, 328.

⁶⁷² *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1851; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI,259, VIII, 255-256, 173-175.

The revolt against Yazīd resulted in the defeat of the Medinan army and afterwards pillage of the city for three days. Ibn ‘Umar remarked in an attempt to relate historical events, ‘By the Lord of the Ka‘ba, it is the outcome of the revolt against ‘Uthmān.’⁶⁷³ It is very strange to see Ibn ‘Umar proving himself being right almost on every occasion and had people listened to him, the course of the history would probably have been different.

Another interesting thing in Ibn ‘Umar’s role is his presence in absence. Although, he seems invisible from any warring side, but visible in many different platforms. This aspect of his role is very similar to omnipresent narrator who knows what is happening at all plots and points of the story. After crushing the revolt in Medina, the Syrian army laid siege on Mecca which continued for several weeks and ended on the sudden death of Yazīd.

4.2.4 The Reign of Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd

After the death of Yazīd, his son Mu‘āwiya b. Yazīd was sworn in as his successor in 63/683 but he survived only for either forty days or three months.⁶⁷⁴ The historical sources differ over his death. Some believe that he died of illness, while others mention that he was poisoned. However according to some, he left caliphate in his lifetime for an aversion to the deeds of his father (Yazīd) and grandfather (Mu‘āwiya) who had seized the caliphate and carried out cruel practices in their regime.⁶⁷⁵

Conclusion

Contrary to Ibn ‘Umar’s traditional image, the sources portray him as a socially, and theopolitically dynamic figure during *fitan* period. This is the original contribution that this dissertation is making through chapters four and five.

Putting the scattered traditions in their historical context also reveals that Ibn ‘Umar had gained great prestige and respect owing to his religious, social and welfare activities. This had made his presence inevitable in the meetings held on the issue of the caliphate. In his three individual and group meetings, Ibn ‘Umar differentiated between caliphate and other political systems of that time and mentioned for a caliph in addition to be a Qurayshī, other meritorious qualities like knowledge, wisdom, experience, and public consensus. He not only showed Mu‘āwiya how

⁶⁷³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 242.

⁶⁷⁴ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, V, 39; *Ibid*, V, 29.

⁶⁷⁵ al-Balādhurī, *Futūḥ al-Buldān*, 226; Khalīfah, *Tārīkh Khalīfah*, 255; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 531; ‘Alī b. al-Ḥusayn al-Mas‘ūdī, *Kitāb al-Tanbīh wa al-Ishrāf* [The Book of Notification and Verification] (Cairo: Dār al-Ṣawī, n.d.), 265; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 226.

to practically implement these guiding principles but warned him too of God's accountability for the grave consequences of his wrong decision.

This chapter also finds Ibn 'Umar a man of strong adherence to his principles: his principled, transparent, and corruption-free politics, not accepting caliphate without public consensus, refusal to use unfair means to become caliph, not supporting anyone wrongly, etc. Mu'āwiyā used multiple tactics to win Ibn 'Umar's support, but nothing could budge him from his stance.

There are many examples of Ibn 'Umar's ability to distinguish between the options of 'a *ḥasan* (good) and an *aḥsan* (better)' and 'a *sharr* (evil) and an *asharr* (lesser evil)'. As a positive, Ibn 'Umar faced Mu'āwiyā's pressure and life-threats, declined lucrative offers and suffered character assassination on account of refusing Yazīd's oath of allegiance. In other words, instead of supporting Yazīd, he picked up a better option of not only resisting the decision but repeatedly stressed upon the Islamic rules for the selection of caliph and forewarned Mu'āwiyā of the evil repercussions. As for the negatives, Ibn 'Umar had to choose between two evils after Yazīd's accession: either to accept him as new caliph despite inferiority or to revolt and put at stake lives, honour, and property of male and female companions. In this situation, his political principle of lesser evil can be summed up in these words 'a weak government is better than anarchy'. Later developments proved that it was a right choice and the stance of Ibn 'Umar and other like-minded companions of not revolting against a less capable caliph turned into a precedent amongst the Sunnites (see subchapter 6.2).

Ibn 'Umar's avoidance to comment on Mu'āwiyā's politics in public and criticizing him in personal meetings show that he was clear about the difference in political censure and propaganda. This was more so as in a tribal society, any invective against a ruler could potentially turn into a volatile propaganda leading to a possible assassination like that of 'Uthmān.

Ibn 'Umar held great reverence for the Prophet's household (*ahl bayt*). He believed their sphere of action lay in faith, wisdom (knowledge) and spirituality. The malicious political practices are beneath their dignity. He had opted out the same field for himself too. 'Viewing affairs from ethical point of view', 'foreseeing future events through the present and making accurate predictions' and 'linking the present events with the past ones' signal to his visionary personality.

5. Chapter Five: Ibn ‘Umar’s Resistance to Tribalistic Politics during the Umayyad Dynasty II - Marwanid Era (64/684 – 73/693)

This chapter aims to examine that part of the second wave of *fitan* which continued in the Marwanid era of the Umayyad dynasty. These *fitan* wars were mainly between two major powers: Syrian based Umayyads and Hijāz based Ibn al-Zubayr. Although, this era continued from 64/684 to 132/750 and eleven caliphs ruled from Marwān’s household, however, our discussion is limited to its first decade and two rulers (Marwān and ‘Abd al-Malik) till the year 73/693 when the second wave of *fitnah* ended at the assassination of Ibn al-Zubayr in Mecca. Similarly, the personality under discussion, ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar also passed away the same year whose peace-promoting activities are the focus of this chapter. It is worth mentioning that the first decade of Marwanid era is the last decade of Ibn ‘Umar’s life.

This chapter has three arguments. First, Ibn ‘Umar was a man of crisis. He saw six rebellions in his life and always opposed them. His name would come up whenever political crisis surfaced. Second, peace, political stability and security held great importance to Ibn ‘Umar. He firmly believed that Islam could flourish in a peaceful society and deeply comprehended the philosophy of Ḥudaybiya (treaty). Third, his policy was *‘ākhira* centric (other worldly) for saving the faith and lives of the people rather than gaining political position.

5.1 The Reign of Marwān b. al-Ḥakam

Marwān is the fourth Umayyad caliph who ruled for less than a year. He was the founder of the second Umayyad dynasty known as Marwanids. Although his reign was very short, but he was successful in the revival of the falling Umayyad regime and his progeny ruled for almost sixty-five years.⁶⁷⁶

5.1.1 Marwān as Caliph

Mu‘āwiya was distinguished from the following Umayyad rulers by his companionship with the Prophet. Besides being a competent politician, he was neither renowned scholar nor army personnel of any noteworthy distinction.⁶⁷⁷ Marwān b. al-Ḥakam on the other hand proved to be an ingenious politician. He also had a good understanding of Islam. Notwithstanding his

⁶⁷⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 227-34.

⁶⁷⁷ Hugh Kennedy, *The Prophet and the Age of the Caliphate* (Edinburgh: Pearson Education Ltd., 2004), 83; Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 136-39.

controversial personality, he had worked with both the religious Caliph ‘Uthmān and tribalistic minded ruler, Mu‘āwiya.⁶⁷⁸

Mu‘āwiya judged him more competent than his son, therefore, he tried to weaken his power through developing animosity between him and Sa‘īd b. al-‘Āṣ but he could not succeed (see subchapter 4.1.1).⁶⁷⁹ Similarly, Marwān’s progeny demonstrated higher capabilities than Mu‘āwiya’s (see chapter 4.1.1).⁶⁸⁰ Mu‘āwiya had ample time to choose his successor. Had he chosen Marwān in the least if not any amongst the pious companions (like Ibn ‘Umar, Ibn al-Zubayr, etc.) rather than his son, the second wave of *fitnah* could have been averted.

As mentioned before, the tribal elders’ late Islam had not won them the maturity that was an emblem of senior companions. Consequently, the Prophet held to rebuild Ka‘ba on Abraham’s foundations in abeyance.⁶⁸¹ Reading the accounts of some latter Umayyad rulers shows they were not happy with the monarchical style of governance and wished for a change. The earlier Umayyad rulers were raised in a tribal set up and the mold of their thought pattern was such that they could not think and do otherwise. However, the latter rulers grew up in an Islamic environment in the company of the senior companions. This influenced them and brought a substantial change in their attitudes. Amongst them were Yazīd’s son Mu‘āwiya as per some historical records.⁶⁸² The same pattern may be seen amongst Marwān’s progeny, especially in Sulaymān b. ‘Abd Malik (d. 99/717) and ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (d. 101/720) (see subchapter 6.1.3), etc.⁶⁸³

Probably, Ibn ‘Umar had a good understanding of the impact of pre-Islamic tribal conditions on the mindset of the tribal leaders therefore he appears more accommodating towards them. He hoped the next generation would have better adherence to Islamic rules for their brought up in a Muslim society.⁶⁸⁴ With the death of many senior companions in the Sufyanid Period, Ibn ‘Umar felt a higher sense of responsibility and his concerted efforts and constructive role to strengthen the *ummah* came up more prominently. During his intermediation to procure peace,

⁶⁷⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 475-479.

⁶⁷⁹ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 91-92.

⁶⁸⁰ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 26-32.

⁶⁸¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 186; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 381.

⁶⁸² al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, VI, 73.

⁶⁸³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 201; Muḥammad b. Mukarram Ibn Manzūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq* [Abridgement of Ibn ‘Asākar’s *History of Damascus*] (Damascus: Dār al-Fikr, 1984), X, 170.

⁶⁸⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, VII, 191; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 201.

he may be seen criticizing both warring factions, interestingly the main burden of his criticism lay upon the religious group. This period is significant to study Ibn 'Umar's thoughts for peace as his efforts in the latter reigns seem to take root.

5.1.2 Accession, Campaigns and Death of Marwān

After Mu'āwiyā b. Yazīd, a crisis like situation emerged and many people claimed succession. Ibn al-Zubayr governed Iraq and Hijaz. Mukhtār al-Thaqafī revolted in Kufa whereas Kharijites mutinied in Abwāz and Najdāt. Similarly, Syria was divided into two factions: one favored Ibn al-Zubayr and the other supported the Umayyads. Even the supporters of the Umayyads were divided: some favoured Mu'āwiyā b. Yazīd's son Khālīd and others wished to vow allegiance to Marwān.⁶⁸⁵

It was amidst such turbulence that Marwān asked Ibn 'Umar to become the next Caliph and assured him the support of the Syrians. Like the crisis of the tussle between Mu'āwiyā and 'Alī and afterwards during the arbitration process, this was the third crisis in which Ibn 'Umar was remembered for the caliphate. However, he refused to take over the caliphate through coercive means and bloodshed.⁶⁸⁶

At that time Ibn 'Umar was almost seventy-four and a little older than 'Uthmān when he took charge of the caliphate. Still in the hour of crisis his name was the topmost to be named by the people. This is a unique occurrence which testifies many of his meritorious qualities. He was an uncontroversial person who had never been blemished with taking sides. He was content who never had lust for power and designations. He bore goodwill for all caliphs and rulers, assisted them in productive deeds, and kept his distance from their controversial decisions. Such qualities made him a dependable, respectable, and trustworthy person.

Ibn 'Umar strongly believed that peaceful transfer of power is only possible when it is made as a result of the public consensus. Any power achieved through bloodshed was not acceptable for him. At Marwān's offer, Ibn 'Umar replied, 'the rule (caliphate) of seventy years is not acceptable for me even at the killing of only one person'.⁶⁸⁷ As was predicted by Ibn 'Umar, it

⁶⁸⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 33-50.

⁶⁸⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 169.

⁶⁸⁷ Ibid; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 310.

was a bloody transition to Marwanids and *fitan* wars continued for almost ten years in their reign.

Here a question arises. Had Ibn 'Umar accepted the caliphate, would the wars of *fitan* have stopped and there would have been no bloodshed in Mecca? This is a difficult question because Marwān himself had to fight for ascension that was not acceptable to Ibn 'Umar. At that time, Syria's military and administrative status was such that its support played a pivotal role in achieving the caliphate. Likewise, it was necessary for a caliph to move and settle in Syria to gain its support, which was another problem for Ibn 'Umar. Moving to Syria was a tough decision because it would result in the transformation of the caliphate in accordance with the will of the Syrian administration. Ibn al-Zubayr probably could not succeed against Marwān because he too was not ready to move there.⁶⁸⁸

Marwān also intended to give his allegiance to Ibn al-Zubayr but was restrained by 'Ubayd Allāh b. Ziyād (d. 67/683)⁶⁸⁹ and later upon his instigation, he sought allegiance for himself in 64/684. The division in the Umayyad's supporters ended in the Jābiyah summit and an agreement was reached on Marwān. Similarly, he defeated the supporters of Ibn al-Zubayr and strengthened his position the same year.⁶⁹⁰

The very next year (65/685) Egypt too became a part of the Syrian government without any substantial resistance and Marwān appointed his son 'Abd 'Azīz its governor.⁶⁹¹ He had just sent his troops to other provinces that he passed away in the month of Ramaḍān in 65/685 after a brief rule of ten months.⁶⁹²

This short tenure is peculiar with regard to Ibn 'Umar as well. Marwān urged him to make a claim to the caliphate assuring him the support of the Syrians. Ibn 'Umar inquired about the people of Iraq, upon which Marwān said that he would fight and defeat them. But Ibn 'Umar refused to accept the caliphate in exchange for shedding blood, sticking to his principle of public consensus.

⁶⁸⁸ Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 225.

⁶⁸⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 530.

⁶⁹⁰ Ibid, V, 533-535; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 33-50.

⁶⁹¹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 540-544.

⁶⁹² Ibid, V, 610-611; Ibn al-Aṭṭam, *al-Futūḥ*, V, 172-173.

5.2 The Reign of ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān

‘Abd al-Malik ruled for the longest period (65/685-86/705) in the Umayyad Dynasty. A large part of his reign was spent in crushing uprisings. His Muslim upbringing in Medina and intellectual abilities helped him establish an Arabic Islamic identity of the Umayyad Caliphate. His major achievements included the inception of Islamic currency, Arabization of the bureaucracy replacing Greek in Syria and Persian in Iraq, reorganization of the army and political and administrative reforms.⁶⁹³

The first nine years of ‘Abd al-Malik's reign are the last nine years of Ibn ‘Umar's life. Since this period is full of tribulations, Ibn ‘Umar's role becomes even more evident. One reason was that very few Companions were alive at that time and Ibn ‘Umar was the last of them to die in Mecca. Being the center of Ibn al-Zubayr, Mecca was a place where important *fitan* events happened. Due to the habit of performing *hajj* and *‘umra* every year, Ibn ‘Umar was present during many incidents of *fitan* and many important aspects of his life left a deep impression in terms of peace.

5.2.1 Accession and Campaigns

‘Abd Malik was sworn in after the death of his father. As a new caliph, he ruled only over two provinces: Syria and Egypt whereas Ibn al-Zubayr ruled over majority of other areas.⁶⁹⁴ Insurrection attempts were foiled, and rebels were duly crushed both by Ibn al-Zubayr (e.g., Mukhtār al-Thaqafī was defeated in 67/687) and ‘Abd Malik (e.g., the Kharijites were defeated in 65/685). At last, only two forces were left in the Islamic empire: Ibn al-Zubayr and ‘Abd Malik. After a tough battle that continued from 71/690 to 72/692, Ibn al-Zubayr lost Iraq. Whereas in Hijaz, Syrian governor ‘Abd Malik took over Medina in 71/690 and around 73/692 under the command of Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf Mecca too was annexed to his territory.⁶⁹⁵

5.2.2 ‘Abd al-Malik as Caliph

‘Abd al-Malik was much more accomplished in matters of Arab culture and tradition. His contributions surpassed Mu‘āwiya's politically and militarily. He is deemed as the most glorious ruler of the Umayyads, and his Islamic scholarship played a role in his achievements.⁶⁹⁶ The year 73/692 is generally known as the year of the second reunion of almost all the Islamic

⁶⁹³ Wellhausen, *The Arab Kingdom*, 223-26; Kennedy, *The Prophet*, 97-102.

⁶⁹⁴ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 610-611; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V, 172-173.

⁶⁹⁵ Ibid, VI, 35-141.

⁶⁹⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 246-249.

world.⁶⁹⁷ The earlier was a peaceful one owing to the efforts and sacrifices of the Hashemites whereas the latter was grisly bloody.

5.2.4 Ibn ‘Umar in ‘Abd al-Malik’s Reign

When Marwān and Ibn al-Zubayr were at war and neither party had acquired a decisive win, Ibn ‘Umar did not give allegiance to any of them. By the same token, he did not swear allegiance to ‘Abd Malik. In those days ever he came across Ibn al-Zubayr and was pressed for allegiance, Ibn ‘Umar would invariably reply that he would never endorse bloodshed.⁶⁹⁸ He equated a *bay‘ah* that led to bloodshed with contacting the impurities.⁶⁹⁹

Those involved in *fitan* wars would also seek Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion, upon which he would take a very strict stand. Replying to a man, he said that the Prophet forbade hurting others to the extent that even whisper between two people to the exclusion of the third.⁷⁰⁰ Another man who had killed people in these battles asked about repentance, Ibn ‘Umar replied (in anger), ‘Drink cold water.’⁷⁰¹ i.e., get ready for the serious consequences.

Ibn ‘Umar and Ibn al-Zubayr are found on different pages during *fitan* period. It may be cited here that Ibn ‘Umar’s actions were supportive of Caliph ‘Alī while Ibn al-Zubayr steps weakened his political position. Apparently, in the same vein Ibn al-Zubayr is reported to incite on his father, al-Zubayr and his paternal aunt, ‘Ā’isha that played some role in the lineup of a military force to avenge ‘Uthmān’s murder which eventually led to the battle of the Camel.⁷⁰² This move significantly strengthened Mu‘āwiya against ‘Alī. Second, some historical records cite that Ibn al-Zubayr is reported to have instigated Imām Ḥusayn to take the journey to Kufa as in his presence he had no chance to win caliphate⁷⁰³ while Ibn ‘Umar did his best to stop him (see chapter 4.2.2). Apart from fighting in the civil wars, Ibn ‘Umar kept a good working relationship with all. For example, he would offer his prayers with two rival groups Khashabiyya (Alids) and Kharijites indiscriminately. He used to be criticized by each on his

⁶⁹⁷ Ibid, VI, 127.

⁶⁹⁸ Nu‘aym b. Hammād, *al-Fitan*, I, 161.

⁶⁹⁹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 171.

⁷⁰⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4871; ‘Abd Allah b. al-Zubayr al-Ḥumaydī, *al-Musnad* [The Chain Supported] (Damascus: Dār al-Saqā’, 1996), no. 661.

⁷⁰¹ Ibn Rushd, *al-Bayān wa al-Taḥṣīl*, XVIII, 192.

⁷⁰² al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 462.

⁷⁰³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 176.

good dealings with the other, but his sole response was ‘Whosoever gives a call to prayer, I shall respond in affirmative. But if they give out a call to kill Muslim brethren or plunder their belongings, I have nothing to do with that’.⁷⁰⁴ Sometimes, he was overheard saying to himself, ‘These people put fellow Muslims to the sword and yet they seek my support by saying ‘O ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘‘Umar! Lend a helping hand’’.⁷⁰⁵ Much later, when this civil war was over, he never regretted upon his behavior.⁷⁰⁶

An incident took place in the early days of second wave of *fitan*. There were two minor powers: Kharijites and Mukhtār al-Thaqafī other than Marwān and Ibn al-Zubayr. When Mukhtār al-Thaqafī announced to kill the opponents of ‘Alī in Kufa, Mūsā (d. 103/722) son of Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh (a member of ‘Umar’s *shūrā*) was there. He had to flee to Basra fearing for his life since his father Ṭalḥa had been killed in the battle of the Camel in fighting against ‘Alī. Mūsā preferred Ibn ‘Umar’s stance to that of other companions.⁷⁰⁷ This shows the gradual support that Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion was getting (see subchapter 6.1.3 for details).

Mukhtār al-Thaqafī’s sister, Ṣafīyah, was married to Ibn ‘Umar. Though Mukhtār was a misguided person from the theological point of view, Ṣafīyah was a pious lady. Ibn ‘Umar had bailed Mukhtār twice upon his wife’s insistence. However, he condemned his erroneous views. In spite of Ibn ‘Umar’s family terms, he did not accept gifts from Mukhtār, a thing that he usually did not do to others.⁷⁰⁸ Mukhtār’s coup was crushed by Ibn al-Zubayr, and he was subsequently killed in 67/686.⁷⁰⁹

5.2.3.1 Ibn ‘Umar and Religious Nature of Allegiance

Like his thoughts on religious nature of the caliphate (discussed in subchapter 3.2.4), his views on allegiance are equally important. In an anecdote, he associated allegiance to a ruler with that to the Prophet. He said, ‘I took oath on the hands of the Prophet and have neither broken it nor changed it till now. Neither have I vowed in favour of a controversial person, nor have I ever awakened a Muslim from his bed (i.e., hurt or disturbed him)’.⁷¹⁰ So, allegiance was not only a political maneuver for Ibn ‘Umar, but it was also a religious and spiritual issue. Because of this

⁷⁰⁴ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 465.

⁷⁰⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 151.

⁷⁰⁶ Ibid, IV, 164.

⁷⁰⁷ Nu‘aym, *al-Fitan*, I, 158; Ibid, IV, 145.

⁷⁰⁸ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 150, 155; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 4474.

⁷⁰⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 273, 290, 319, 321.

⁷¹⁰ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 164.

approach, it is understandable that he considered allegiance as a continuum or process, not an action in a moment. In my view, because of this deep engagement in the selection of caliph, Ibn ‘Umar was very cautious in giving his *bay‘ah* to anyone during the period of turmoil. Ibn ‘Umar once said to his son, Sālim:

When we were accompanying the Prophet, he said, ‘O People! Do you know that I am the Messenger of God?’ People replied in unison that they do. Upon this the Prophet said, ‘Do you know that God says in Qur’ān that whoever obeys the Messenger, he has obeyed Him?’ The people said that they do. The Prophet said that as following him has been made obligatory, likewise, it has been enjoined upon them to follow their leaders... If a leader (*Imām*) offers his prayer in sitting position, they must do the same.⁷¹¹

However, Ibn ‘Umar was also aware of the current social and religious conditions. He could see that with the demise of the first four caliphs, the religious nature of allegiance (or caliphate) was no longer respected in practice. More so, ‘might is right’ had become the norm of the day, therefore, the practical solution to this evil was to delay his allegiance until one could decisively win over the other.⁷¹² The successful insurrection of Mu‘āwiya against ‘Alī had practically taught him that Syria was in a better position, and ‘Abd al-Malik shall probably overpower Ibn al-Zubayr. It happened many times that a person would be forced to swear first by one contesting party and later by the other. Once Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693) was made to swear in favour of Ibn al-Zubayr and then by the Syrians by coercive means.⁷¹³ This approach of Ibn ‘Umar is not a Machiavellian approach. It is a realistic solution that prioritizes sociopolitical conditions and is produced for how little blood is shed during anarchy (see also subchapter 4.2.3).

5.2.3.2 Allusion to *Ḥudaybiya* during Wars in *Ḥajj*

Pilgrimage (*ḥajj*) to Mecca is one of the five basic pillars of Islam and Ibn ‘Umar was an expert of it. This ritual had (and has) converted Mecca into a central city for the Muslims around the world and almost each year Ibn ‘Umar travelled from Medina to perform *ḥajj* and *‘umra*. Even during the times of *fitan*, Ibn ‘Umar did not quit this practice. It was probably around 68/688

⁷¹¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 5679.

⁷¹² Nu‘aym, *al-Fitan*, II, 712; Ibn Sa‘īd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 149.

⁷¹³ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 11247; al-Ḥārith b. Muḥammad Ibn Abī ‘Usāmah, *Musnad al-Ḥārith* [A Ḥadīth Collection] (Medina: Markaz Khidmat al-Sunnah wa al-Sīrah al-Nabawiyah, 1992), no. 604.

when he made *hajj* in presence of multiple Imāms (spiritual leaders to lead the *hajj*) representing multiple conflicting caliphs.⁷¹⁴ People got divided as followers of four different Imāms and feared this rift might lead to cancellation of the observance that year.

Despite this uncertain situation, Ibn ‘Umar came to Mecca saying that if he was not granted permission, he would do the same as the Prophet did in Ḥudaybiya.⁷¹⁵ There was a war between Ḥajjāj and Ibn Zubayr that had imperiled security situation, but Ibn ‘Umar was not scared. When it was related to religious duties, he never thought of staying in Medina instead of performing the *hajj*. In other words, he was really not a passive or coward person. When it was necessary, he was ready to sacrifice his life.

Secondly, Ibn ‘Umar might have thought that the *hajj* offered an opportunity to unite the *ummah* under one banner. His reference to Ḥudaybiya becomes more significant if seen in this context. At this stage of his life, two major hostile forces (Ibn al-Zubayr in Hijaz and ‘Abd al-Malik in Syria) were contesting against each other to win control. Ibn al-Zubayr’s stronghold was Mecca where the rites of the *hajj* were performed. During this tussle, pilgrimage was announced which was a sacred worship for the adversaries and hence maintaining peace was abiding. Ibn ‘Umar made an intellectual and spiritual effort to seek guidance from an incident that occurred sixty years ago during the lifetime of the Prophet in 6/628. At that time too (Muslims of Medina and the pagans of Mecca) were two opposing forces that contended against each other. Meanwhile, the Prophet left Medina for Mecca along with his companions intending to perform *‘umra* for the first time after a very long period. This was a sacred worship for both the factions and hence holding peace was mandatory.

Muslim sources cite Ibn ‘Umar as the first to take allegiance in Ḥudaybiya⁷¹⁶ and the only companion to make it twice on the hands of the Prophet (see subchapter 2.1.3).⁷¹⁷ Coincidentally, Ibn ‘Umar was the first Muslim, next to the Prophet, who owing to his in-depth understanding of *sīrah* could discover the practical implications of the Ḥudaybiya pact in retaining peace particularly during the *fitan* period. Similarly, *hajj* days came twice⁷¹⁸ when wars were in progress during this period, and on both occasions Ibn ‘Umar alluded to this pact.

⁷¹⁴ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 324.

⁷¹⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1708.

⁷¹⁶ Ibid, no. 2730; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 90.

⁷¹⁷ al-Ḥakīm, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6368.

⁷¹⁸ Once in 68/688 and second in 73/693. See also chapter 5.2.3.5.

In other words, he is the person who had witnessed such happenings in his lifetime that enabled him to perceive the implication of Ḥudaybiya for establishing peace.

5.2.3.3 “We fought until there was no more *fitnah*”

In those days, people keenly sought Ibn ‘Umar’s endorsement and favorable opinion as he was deemed an authority in religious affairs and politics due to his scholarly disposition. During Ibn al-Zubayr’s era (in Hijaz), two persons came to see Ibn ‘Umar and said that despite being son of a caliph and a companion of the Prophet, what obstructs him from going to the battlefield? He replied, “the inhibition that taking a fellow Muslim’s life has been forbidden”. The two men said that had God not commanded to keep fighting till the *fitnah* subsides and *dīn* (worship) is for God?⁷¹⁹ He retorted that they (he and other companions) had fought till the *fitnah* was over and *dīn* (worship) became for God. Now what do these people want, to fight till the *fitnah* re-emerges and *dīn* becomes for other than God.⁷²⁰

This is an important anecdote. Here a person was trying to quote the Qur’ānic verses out of textual and historical contexts both. These verses belonged to the period of religious persecution that he was using to win the political battle for the caliphate. The early Islamic history must be kept in mind to develop a good understanding of these verses. The prevalent religion in Mecca was paganism, whereas the Prophet preached monotheism (*tawḥīd*) and soon, he found many followers. But these early converts were tyrannized in the polytheistic environment to revert them to paganism. Finally, they had to migrate to Medina where they found ample scope to prosper. An Islamic state was established, and a series of battles took place between the two. The people of Medina had no other option except to defend their religion; otherwise, they would have been wiped out. In these conditions, the verses related to *jihād* were revealed, which have nothing to do with political adventurism.

Ibn ‘Umar was being instigated to take part in the political conflicts on caliphate through the Qur’ānic verses revealed in the context of religious persecution. Ibn ‘Umar promptly replied that he had already fought the named battle (along with the Prophet and his companions) until the period of religious persecution finished, and all may worship God freely. Later, Ibn ‘Umar asked the man whether he and other likeminded people wished to set off such political clashes to revive the period of the same evil (religious oppression).

⁷¹⁹ al-Qur’ān, 8: 39.

⁷²⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4514.

Ibn ‘Umar commented upon the involvement of religious factions in the political clashes in these words, ‘You wish to fight to revert to the *fitnah* (religious oppression)’. It is very surprising to see Ibn ‘Umar connecting extremism with oppression. It relates that whenever religious people become a party, reverence is not the only thing to ensure their dominance over their political opponents. However, in retaliation, the opponents would let loose a spree of attack on them. Since the activities of the faith community take place within the religious sphere, consequently, mosques (*masājid*), seminaries (*madāris*) and other sacred places may come under attack. Thus, people associated with these religious figures are persecuted and so on and so forth.

In short, Ibn ‘Umar means to say that ‘religious violence and extremism would beget persecution’. These predictions of Ibn ‘Umar got materialized and to crush Ibn al-Zubayr and his accomplices, stones were hurled on the holy cities of Mecca and Medina to the extent that the Ka‘ba came under assault too and its sanctity was violated.

Ibn ‘Umar’s words may be better understood in the backdrop of today’s world. When the religious people began a political propaganda lashing at the religious shortcomings of their secular minded Muslim rulers in various Islamic countries, the reaction came in the form of a ban on beard, *hijāb* and other religious restrictions. Ibn ‘Umar could perceive that the religious people cannot overthrow the then ruling tribal leaders through violent uprising under any circumstances and that nothing may be gained except for civil disturbance.⁷²¹

5.2.3.4 “Not in the way God but in the way of the Qurash youths”

Numerous anecdotes reveal that Ibn ‘Umar’s criticism of extremism and violence is diverse in nature and covers broad areas. He not only prevented people from physical participation in *fitan* but also from supporting any group financially. While quoting an example, he replied so to an inquirer, ‘Make a habit to keep off from any rebellious activity’.⁷²² Once a person on his deathbed willed to give away a camel in the ‘way of God (*sabīl Allāh*)’. His nephew intended to receive the camel on the grounds that he was in Ibn al-Zubayr’s army. When Ibn ‘Umar was

⁷²¹ Mursal Farman, “Ibn ‘Umar’s Interpretation of the Qur’ānic Verse ‘Fight them until Fitnah is No More’ and its Relevance to Contemporary Muslims”, *Australian Journal of Islamic Studies*, Vol 6 Issue 2 (2021), 49-65.

⁷²² Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 161.

inquired, he did not allow replying that these people are rather fighting in the ‘way of the Quraysh youths.’⁷²³ He added that this fighting is to ‘stamp the seal’.⁷²⁴

The reference to the ‘Quraysh youths’ is very important. Ibn ‘Umar is illustrating political instability of this time by quoting a prophetic tradition that suggests destruction of the *ummah* shall be at the hands of the Quraysh youths owing to their political adventurism.⁷²⁵ The phrase ‘stamp the seal’ is used metaphorically in the sense of ‘acquiring local leadership’ that who will be the local leader of the caliph at the upper level.⁷²⁶ So, Ibn ‘Umar criticized the political leadership at both the upper and lower levels for causing the violence. Another anecdote further clarifies Ibn ‘Umar’s methodology:

A woman came to Ibn ‘Umar and said that her dying husband has willed a camel in the way of God. Ibn ‘Umar replied that it shall be given in the way of God accordingly. A student, ‘Abd al-Rahmān b. Abī Nu‘m who was seated nearby commented, ‘O Ibn ‘Umar! You have added to the sorrow of the woman (i.e., have not clearly explained).’ Ibn ‘Umar replied, ‘You want me to ask the woman to give away the camel to the troops (of Ibn al-Zubayr) who come out to riot and plunder’. The same student further inquired, ‘Then what would you command her to do?’ Thereupon Ibn ‘Umar replied, ‘I instruct her to give away this camel to pious people... to the pilgrims of Ka‘ba. As these pilgrims are God’s delegation and are unlike Satan’s emissaries’ (he repeated it thrice). Then the student inquired further, ‘Who are the emissaries of Satan? He replied, ‘Those people who visit the emirs (officials) and convey a statement in such a mischievous manner that results in divulgence, dissent, and discord. Later they spread lies amongst the Muslims, and are, consequently, awarded with prizes and endowments.’⁷²⁷

This anecdote is significant for many reasons: First, the battles fought for the sake of caliphate were misusing the name of religion. The public would assume them *jihād* in the way of God and ask about spending their religious offerings. Since, Ibn ‘Umar was present when *jihād* was enjoined hence, he could differentiate between the wars against

⁷²³ Ibrāhīm b. Muḥammad al-Fazārī, *al-Siyar* [A Book on Legal Issues of War and Foreign Law] (Beirut: Mu’assasat al-Risālah, 1987), no. 93.

⁷²⁴ Muḥammad b. Ismā‘īl al-Bukhārī, *al-Adab al-Mufrad* [Prophetic Traditions on Manners and Morals] (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā‘ir al-Islāmiyyah, 1989), no. 339.

⁷²⁵ *Saḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3605, 7058; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 8304, 10927.

⁷²⁶ *al-Adab al-Mufrad*, no. 339.

⁷²⁷ al-Qurṭubī, *al-Jāmi‘ li Ahkām al-Qur‘ān*, VIII, 185.

religious oppression and the battles waged to win caliphate. Therefore, he knew that political wars only cause bloodshed and destruction. Second, he would prevent people from spending on such battles and instruct them expend their offerings in other religious heads. Third, Ibn ‘Umar mentioned *the helpless pilgrims* as an example of *the way of God* and stated that they (pilgrims) are ‘the emissaries of God who are unlike Satan's delegation’. It seems as if he was indirectly calling these political warriors *the delegates of Satan*. Fourth, he further elaborated on his notion of *the delegates of Satan* upon inquiry.

Chapters three-five have already discussed Ibn ‘Umar’s stress on public consent for the election of a caliph. Here Ibn ‘Umar explains the implications that when a person comes to power without public approval ... by force or bribery, he is usually supported by warlords similar to him. Therefore, deterioration of leadership at top level seeps down till the lower ranks and positions. The good leaders and real public representatives turn away from such a caliph and bad people join him. This lower-level leadership spread such evil and false things amongst the nobles and the commoners which results in disintegration and thus they smoothen the way to their interests. This gives an idea how deeply Ibn ‘Umar could perceive the difference between the tribalistic and Islam caliphates.

Fifth, the above cited anecdotes elaborate on how Ibn ‘Umar made efforts to counter violent extremism. If on the one hand, he tried to stop people from taking part in violent activities or from providing financial assistance, then on the other hand, he severely criticized the misuse of religious terminology. Sometimes he became too harsh in his criticism. In Islam, terms like *fi sabīl Allāh* (in the way of God) have their particular end uses. The Qur’ān encourages people to make these monetary offerings in God’s way. Same was the case with *wafd al-Raḥmān* (delegation of the Most Gracious God). Thus, those people who misused these terms for political gain, declared themselves to be the people of God, held their task as a religious obligation and sought financial assistance from the people. Ibn ‘Umar criticized such people and called them the devil’s delegation.

5.2.3.5 Criticism and Countercriticism

During the days of unrest, Ibn ‘Umar’s stance was met with ridicule and satire from people. Once a person consulted Ibn ‘Umar for mediation on some personal matter. Miswar b. Makhramah (d. 64/684), a companion who proactively opposed the Umayyads, retorted that how could Ibn ‘Umar dissolve his dispute who had withdrawn himself from the conflict

amongst the Prophet's *ummah*.⁷²⁸ Miswar's criticism shows that Ibn 'Umar suffered almost the same fate as did Imām Ḥasan who was called 'O who blackened the faces of the Muslims' in Kufa after his great peace treaty with Mu'āwiya.⁷²⁹ Ibn 'Umar's approach seemed to the people as if he had completely withdrawn from the conflict.

Ibn 'Umar's personality had a predominant religious aura and objections were raised that he had made it a habit to go for *hajj* and *'umra* every year and abandoned *jihād* in the way of God.⁷³⁰ Some doubted his intentions that he had left people in the lurch so that they might kill each other in mutual confrontation and when no one is left around, he would declare himself a caliph.⁷³¹ Others would call him the worst person of the *ummah*⁷³² and tried to convince him by citing verses about *jihād* and warfare from the Qur'ān.⁷³³

This shows Ibn 'Umar was *fearless from criticism*, an attribute of a true believer described in the Qur'ān, '(Believers) fear not the reproof of any reprover'⁷³⁴. These traditions show that Ibn 'Umar was calling others to follow the same peace promoting lifestyle which he himself was leading. The absence of contradictions in his words and deeds shows that his peaceful life was not the result of any fear but was a conscious policy. If his peace had been due to the fear of the powerful Syrian government, he would have used a language in front of them that would please them.

There was no such allegation which Ibn 'Umar did not refute strongly. Regarding *hajj*, his response was that he performed *hajj* as it was one of the five pillars of Islam.⁷³⁵ Ibn 'Umar was the most knowledgeable on *hajj* affairs. He not only performed *hajj* himself but used this opportunity to teach others. I guess, for Ibn 'Umar, this pedagogic approach was also part of intellectual *jihād* (see also subchapter 2.6 on Ibn 'Umar's scholarship).

Likewise, when he was alleged to be the worst person of the *ummah*, he replied thus, 'How come I stood as the worst person when I shed neither blood of other Muslims nor had I segregated the

⁷²⁸ al-Baghdādī, *al-Munammaq*, 300.

⁷²⁹ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 3350; Ibn al-Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 8.

⁷³⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4513-14.

⁷³¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 158.

⁷³² Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 151.

⁷³³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4513-14.

⁷³⁴ al-Qur'ān 5: 54.

⁷³⁵ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4514.

ummah into factions nor had revolted'.⁷³⁶ Most probably, this person held Ibn 'Umar responsible for the civil strife. Ibn 'Umar's reply was very clear that it was not he who was the worst person but those who killed innocent people, made groups for self-interests, and then revolted, making serious threat to the *ummah*'s unity, security, and peace.

To the person who exclaimed that had Ibn 'Umar claimed caliphate, there would not have been as many as two persons to oppose him, Ibn 'Umar gave a reasonable reply. He said that he disliked the prospect that two persons came to him with difference of opinion (one opposed him and the other demanded him reasons for that).⁷³⁷ With this lucid response, Ibn 'Umar clarified that if the people had not unanimously sworn him in, the same contention would have surfaced up against him as it had risen against others.

To those who blamed Ibn 'Umar that 'he had forsaken his people to clash and kill each other and when no one else is left around, he would declare himself a caliph',⁷³⁸ he gave a concise answer. He said that he had no such intentions and that when people would develop a consensus in favour of any single person, he would give him allegiance too.⁷³⁹

Islamic sources show that during the *fitan* wars, no one tried to stop and guide the warring factions more than Ibn 'Umar did. Therefore, this allegation does not seem to be sound. The answer to the accusation of 'desire for the caliphate' is clear from the above paragraph itself. The historical events also reveal that he did not have any hunger for rule. He had made it clear on numerous occasions that the Islamic caliphate cannot be established by coercion, but only by the consent of the people.

5.2.3.6 'Even slaughtering as many sheep is excess'

Ibn 'Umar carried on with his reforming agenda in the same veins. He did not limit spreading his word to the masses but made his voice reach out to the gentry as well. Once Ibn al-Zubayr's appointed governor, Muṣ'ab b. al-Zubayr (d. 72/691) – who had led a political battle that killed about five or six thousand people – was rebuked by Ibn 'Umar in these words, 'Had you slaughtered so many goats at one time out of your inheritance from your father, even then it was cruel?'.⁷⁴⁰ When Muṣ'ab agreed that killing so many goats at one time is unjust, Ibn 'Umar

⁷³⁶ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 151.

⁷³⁷ Ibid.

⁷³⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 158.

⁷³⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁴⁰ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 340; Miskwayh, *Tajārib al-'Umam*, II, 212.

retorted sharply, ‘If doing so for goats is unfair, what to say of men who might be in the wrong but about whom hope of God’s forgiveness is granted’.⁷⁴¹ Ibn ‘Umar’s reference to the inherited goats is very interesting because Muṣ‘ab’s father al-Zubayr was very rich. According to an estimate, he left an inheritance of more than fifty-seven million dirhams.⁷⁴² Ibn ‘Umar’s advice meant how a person is not as sensitive about the sanctity of human life as he is about an inherited property.

5.2.3.7 ‘Whose sins outnumber the sins of jinn and mankind’

Likewise, Ibn ‘Umar reproached Ibn al-Zubayr. Once when he was confined to Mecca and Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf came to crush the movement with an armed force, he tried to dissuade Ibn al-Zubayr from such activities. Ibn ‘Umar told him, ‘I have heard the Prophet saying that a miscreant in the Holy Mecca shall commit so many sins that shall outnumber the sins of all men and jinn. So, be extra careful lest you should become such a person’.⁷⁴³ Besides, he tried to talk with Ḥajjāj. Ibn ‘Umar told him that by pelting stones, he would obstruct people from performing *hajj*. His efforts to stop the war bore fruits and the rituals were performed safely and smoothly.⁷⁴⁴ Ibn Umar’s knowledge of past and re-evaluation of the prophetic practices in the light of current events make him very different from others. His preferences are not blind imitation, but based on knowledge, experience, and deep thinking. When it is related to the rights of the people, he never stays silent.

During these days, Ibn ‘Umar was again barred from *hajj* on the pretext that a battle was expected. Ibn ‘Umar rationalized from Hudaybiya’s incident that if they were not allowed, he would do the same as the Prophet did when he was obstructed from performing *‘umra* (see chapter 5.2.3.1).⁷⁴⁵ This is another example that reveals that Ibn ‘Umar never considers past events as a past but living models for him. I guess he knows how to contemporize these events and bring them to current situation.

⁷⁴¹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 350.

⁷⁴² Aḥmad ‘Āṣim, “al-Milyādīrāt al-Mubashsharīn bi al-Jannah [Billionaire Ṣaḥābah]”, *I’raf Website*, <<https://e3raph.com/2017/03/22/680/>>

⁷⁴³ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 6200.

⁷⁴⁴ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 400.

⁷⁴⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, V, 143-144.

5.2.3.8 The Two Takbirs

Ḥajjāj sought guidance from Ibn ‘Umar in matters of *ḥajj* as per directions of the Caliph ‘Abd Malik in matters of *ḥajj*.⁷⁴⁶ Similarly, the battle did not take place in accordance with the instructions of Ibn ‘Umar and the *ḥajj* was revived. On this occasion, the Muslims were divided into two groups. Some offered prayers with Ibn al-Zubayr while others in the camp of Ḥajjāj. However, Ibn ‘Umar offered his prayers with both camps and upon objection, he would reply that both factions were fighting for the rule hence it was not a religious war (*jihād*). He said, ‘I praise or condemn neither of them.’⁷⁴⁷

This is a very important anecdote with many lessons to be drawn from. First, Ibn ‘Umar did not deem both groups exemplary considering Islamic principles. Despite being strong militarily and administratively, the Syrian based Umayyads did not meet the standard because it had seized the caliphate. All these *fitan* wars were taking place because it did not involve the consent of the people and opposition was being suppressed per force. Secondly, the groups opposing the Syrian government were wrongfully justifying their rebellion from the Qur’ānic injunctions. Contrarily, the Prophet’s military expeditions were defensive or against religious oppression. Also, despite having the right to resent, those who revolted had no reason to win the war. Thirdly, it can be deduced that from Ibn ‘Umar’s perspective, both groups did not adhere to standard Islamic principles and were equal. Nevertheless, he managed to coexist with them in harmony, supported each in righteousness and criticized them in injustice.

Ḥajjāj waged war again after *ḥajj* that eventually ended in the victory of the Syrians. Ibn al-Zubayr and his allies were killed whereupon the Syrians raised *takbīr*. Ibn ‘Umar commented, ‘What has happened to these people? In the times of the Prophet, *takbīr* was raised in Medina on the birth of Ibn al-Zubayr. But these people are raising it upon his death’.⁷⁴⁸ So, Ibn ‘Umar never abstained from his serious reminds and recalled the people what the correct action was and how it should have been taken.

Here, Ibn ‘Umar alluded to an important historical incident. Ever since Muslims had migrated from Mecca to Medina, they did not beget any new children. There was a deep concern in the immigrant (*muhājir*) Muslim community. ‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr was the first newborn of the immigrant companions; hence his birth was celebrated by the Muslims. The first thing that was

⁷⁴⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 1662-63.

⁷⁴⁷ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, VIII, 196.

⁷⁴⁸ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 405.

given to Ibn al-Zubayr was the chewed date by the Prophet that added to his prestige amongst people.⁷⁴⁹ Once again, it may be seen how Ibn ‘Umar is trying to bring out connections in the historical events. Ibn ‘Umar was clearly criticizing the Syrian rulers and his words must have reverberated around the ruling Umayyad family. He was an eyewitness to the Meccan history of Islam, a dynamic member of Medinan society from the very beginning and an advisor to the caliphs. All this not only gave him privilege but also made him a sole authority. Knowing the past gave him a prestigious status and allowed him to make such a comment. Relating his time with the early golden period (*‘aṣr al-sa‘ādah*) of Islam made his comments very influential. In other words, he really put everything in its proper historical and conceptual context.

5.2.3.9 ‘Confronting a danger beyond one’s capacity’

The dead body of Ibn al-Zubayr was hung over to intimidate opponents. Ḥajjāj even debarred Ibn al-Zubayr’s mother, ‘Asmā’ b. Abū Bakr (d. 73/692) from the burial rituals. When Ibn ‘Umar happened to cross the crucified corpse, he addressed him thus:

‘May peace be with you, Father of Khubayb (Ibn al-Zubayr)! I tried my best to ward you off from this (politics). You kept fasts, offered prayers in the dark of nights, and looked after your relatives well. Verily, those who raised *takbīr* on your birth (*ṣaḥāba*) were far superior and greater than those who have raised *takbīr* on your death (the Umayyad army)’.⁷⁵⁰ He also added, ‘I tried to stop you from stepping into this low mire, but you did not listen to me. Though when I heard the Prophet saying that no Muslim should degrade himself; I inquired how one could do so. The Prophet answered that it happens when one puts himself in a danger that he cannot cope up with and as a result he is degraded. I have also heard the Prophet saying that if an unjust *amīr* (governor/caliph) kills me while I am complying to God’s commands, I shall prefer it much more over embracing martyrdom in *jihād* at the battlefield’.⁷⁵¹

Ibn ‘Umar’s mention of a prophetic tradition ‘confronting a danger one cannot cope up with’ in this context is remarkable. Its impact upon *Ahl al-Sunnah*’s perspective of Imamate is great that will be discussed in detail in subchapter 6.2.5.

Ibn ‘Umar went to console ‘Asmā’ and shed tears to see the grief-stricken mother.⁷⁵² According

⁷⁴⁹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3909, 5469; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2146.

⁷⁵⁰ Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 405; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 446.

⁷⁵¹ Abū al-‘Arab, *al-Miḥan*, I, 225.

⁷⁵² *Ibid*, I, 213; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 381; Ibn Athīr, *al-Kāmil*, III, 405.

to some traditions, he was elderly and weak at that time so much that his slave or son, Sālim accompanied him. He did not wish to cross Ibn al-Zubayr's crucified corpse, but his assistant forgot to take another route.⁷⁵³ Some history chronicles cite that when Ibn 'Umar's admonitory and appreciative words upon the corpse reached Ḥajjāj's ears, he came and took down the dead body himself.⁷⁵⁴

5.2.3.10 *Ibn 'Umar vs. Ḥajjāj*

Ibn 'Umar also criticized Ḥajjāj's nonsense in religious affairs. For example, once Ḥajjāj said: 'Ibn al-Zubayr had made changes in the Qur'ān'. Ibn 'Umar stood up to counter this allegation and said, 'You speak a lie. Neither did he do any such thing, nor could he do this, and neither can you do such a thing'.⁷⁵⁵ Similarly, he would pray individually when got fed up with his leading prayers at a much-delayed time. Once Ḥajjāj asked for the cause, he responded, 'We come to offer prayers in the mosque. Lead the congregational prayers punctually and blab later'.⁷⁵⁶

Ḥajjāj strongly disapproved of his viewpoint regarding Ibn al-Zubayr and was looking for an opportunity to kill him. He summoned Ibn 'Umar to his place and he duly came with his son. Ḥajjāj asked his son, Sālim to kill an innocent person. Sālim skillfully abstained from executing the kill orders and also managed to get rid of him. Later, Ibn 'Umar kissed his son before people saying that he had named him *Sālim* to be blessed with peace.⁷⁵⁷

Exempting Ibn 'Umar and ordering the son to kill an innocent was either due to Ibn 'Umar's old age or his presumption that the son would be less experienced than the father and readily do what is being commanded. Ibn 'Umar's kissing of Sālim was probably because the son had fulfilled the father's expectations. The subchapter 6.1.3 will further elaborate how Sālim carried on the legacy of his father.

Later, Ibn 'Umar was trampled under a horse's hooves with the intention to kill him on Friday but luckily, he was saved. On another occasion, a poisonous, pointed iron wedge got pierced in his foot. He became seriously ill and within three days breathed his last.⁷⁵⁸ When Ḥajjāj paid

⁷⁵³ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 447.

⁷⁵⁴ Abū al-'Arab, *al-Miḥan*, I, 125-128; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6342.

⁷⁵⁵ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 184.

⁷⁵⁶ Ibid, IV, 159.

⁷⁵⁷ Sālim (سالم) is an Arabic word and active participle from the root (سلم or silm i.e. peace). Sālim means 'one in safety and unhurt'.

⁷⁵⁸ Abū al-'Arab, *al-Miḥan*, I, 225-228.

him a visit in sickness, Ibn 'Umar told him that he might not had intended to injure him but caused these serious injuries for allowing arms in the holy place (*ḥaram*).⁷⁵⁹ When the masses paid allegiance to 'Abd Malik after the death of Ibn al-Zubayr, Ibn 'Umar too sent him his written oath.⁷⁶⁰ It was a religiously oriented letter that reminded the caliph of his obligations and his accountability before God.⁷⁶¹

Ibn 'Umared wish to be buried in Medina like the Prophet or at least outside *ḥaram* (inviolable zone of Mecca).⁷⁶² He also willed that Ḥajjāj should not lead his funeral prayer. But his wish remained unfulfilled.⁷⁶³ His funeral prayer was led by Ḥajjāj and he was buried in the place known as Fakhkh in the cemetery of the emigrants.⁷⁶⁴

This further clarifies that consciously or subconsciously, Ibn 'Umar's modus operandi to work against an atrocious government was through perseverance and peaceful resistance. His distance from fight over the caliphate despite competence and eligibility, his neutrality for all the contesting candidates, and withdrawal from any monetary benefits or positions rendered him a grace and a higher moral status in society. Consequently, his words were not taken as a scornful criticism by either party. Thus, the ruling elite listened to his criticism and advice with credence and tolerance as opposed to their contenders'.

Conclusion

Based on my analysis, I argue that Ibn 'Umar considered caliphate as a servant leadership and religious obligation. He strongly believed that caliphate is not something to fight for; rather a caliph should be selected by the community. Therefore, when it comes to get this leadership performe, he considered it a worldly matter and not part of religion. For the same reason, he rejected numerous offers to declare himself a caliph. Just as it is community's right to select a caliph, it is their religious duty to obey him except when it comes to process the selection by unfair means (force or bribery), Ibn 'Umar was very reluctant. Election of a caliph should be

⁷⁵⁹ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 185; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 966-967.

⁷⁶⁰ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 7203; al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, VI, 127.

⁷⁶¹ 'Abd al-Raḥmān b. 'Amr Abū Zur'ah al-Dimashqī, *al-Tārīkh Abī Zur'ah* [History of Abū Zur'ah] (Damascus: Arab Academy of Damascus, n.d.), 192.

⁷⁶² This was also religiously motivated wish. Ibn 'Umar was *muhājir* (immigrant) and *muhājir* never returns to his/her homeland. When he was poisoned by Ḥajjāj's men, he was afraid of spoiling his *hijrah* (migration) by being buried in Mecca.

⁷⁶³ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 187-188.

⁷⁶⁴ Ibid; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6359.

processed through a council (*shūrā*) peacefully and the one who has the majority should be elected. In case, the *umma* is divided and supports different candidates, the community should delay allegiance until the situation becomes clear and it should be given to the individual/group that wins. According to Ibn ‘Umar, it is not appropriate for a person (or group), no matter how high character he has got, to claim the caliphate without full preparation and ability and as a result, cause humiliation, murder and unrest to himself and society.

According to Ibn ‘Umar, there is no room for an armed rebellion, even if the ruler is incompetent or immoral. To him, the disadvantages of rebellion outweigh the disadvantages of bad governance. Similarly, Muslims fighting each other is an extremely alien concept in Ibn ‘Umar’s religious and sociological understanding. But peaceful, sincere criticism was an essential part of his stance, especially regarding religion. In the same way, he did criticize in political matters but carefully so that criticism does not become propaganda.

Ibn ‘Umar seems to understand the impact of pre-Islamic tribal conditioning on warring tribal leaders for the sake of power and was, therefore, showing more tolerance towards them. It seems he was expecting a better generation in the future after their upbringing in the Muslim atmosphere.

The existence of smaller number of Companions in the Marwanid period made Ibn ‘Umar’s role even more prominent. At that time, he was a man who knew the past (time of the Prophet, the first four caliphs and reign of the Sufyanid era), wise enough to rationalize the current situation and had an insight to project the future. All these qualities made him a unique personality in the eyes of the masses. His thoughts/words proved to be true throughout history.

At that stage, a greater part of his criticism is found to be directed at the religious group. One possible reason is that if the violence based on secular politics leads to further violence, then those who fight on the basis of religious politics, their violence breeds religious extremism and persecution. Another reason for Ibn ‘Umar’s criticism of the religious class is their misuse of religious terms, such as the term *armed jihād* primarily aimed to defend the Muslim state of Medina against the atrocities and oppression the Meccan pagan state. However, the religious political groups began to use it to gain power. Ibn ‘Umar seems to demystify and counter such religious extremism.

The Ḥudaybiya Treaty holds great importance in peace studies. It has special significance in the formation of Ibn ‘Umar’s personality and close resemblance with the role he played during *fitan*. He was the first companion to swear allegiance to the Prophet in Ḥudaybiya and the only

one to take it twice. Being the first ever person to refer to Ḥudaybiya and alluding to it twice during the battles of *fitan* is very interesting and surprising. It gives a feeling as if he was the first person to understand the practical significance of this important event of the *sīrah* in terms of peace.

6. Chapter Six: Ibn 'Umar's Legacy during Post-Ibn 'Umar Period

The main purpose of this chapter is to examine the impact of Ibn 'Umar's legacy in post Ibn 'Umar era. This legacy has the following two aspects, and each aspect shall be discussed in a separate subchapter. The previous chapters reveal that Ibn 'Umar could not effectively prevent the battles that were fought during the period of *fitan* and the substance of his thoughts could not be completely understood or appreciated during his lifetime. However, his influence prevailed amongst the group of influential people. It is these same influential people from the three generations (*ṣaḥābah*, *tābi'ūn* and *tābi'ū al-tābi'īn*) who are being discussed in the first subchapter and who later left long-lasting impacts. After the incidents of *fitan*, a persistent discussion on different facets of revolt (necessity, consequences, etc.) arose in the major group of the *ummah* i.e., *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* which bears close resemblance with Ibn 'Umar's thoughts. A comparison of Ibn 'Umar's stance shall be made in the second subchapter.

This chapter has two arguments: first, according to Ibn 'Umar, route to social transformation was bottom-up i.e., to train and equip such potential people at grass root level who later become the effective cause of top-down change. This top-down change has also two aspects: socio-political and intellectual. In other words, the well-educated and trained people in both fields should come to the fore who later deeply influence society. Second, due to its scholarly nature, Ibn 'Umar's stance on *fitan* attracted intellectuals more than it did the masses. These intellectuals first worked individually as agents of social change on *fitan* and later as a group known as *Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah*.

6.1 Impact of Ibn 'Umar's Stance on the Influential Figures

This section aims to discuss the impact of Ibn 'Umar's stance on influential people that eventually got evolved into the viewpoint of *Ahl al-Sunnah* regarding conflict and rebellion against rulers. The first section of this subchapter shall deal with Ibn 'Umar's distinguished position amongst the senior companions whereby he became an icon of peace in a civil-war scenario. The next three sections of this subchapter relate those towering personalities in the first three Muslim generations respectively (i.e., companions, followers, and the successors of the followers) who had explicitly or implicitly adopted and supported Ibn 'Umar's approach. This shall target three goals simultaneously: how the viewpoint of majority of the companions especially Ibn 'Umar's on incidents of *fitan* wars (35/656-73/693) turned into the perspective of *Ahl al-Sunnah* in the latter half of the second century of Islam thus helping to bridge a gap. This shall not only enable us to determine the personalities influenced by Ibn 'Umar's viewpoint but

shall also develop an understanding of how this stance had spread beyond the borders of Hijaz (Medina and Mecca). It will, moreover, furnish a foundation for the next section as these same personalities later played a vital role in laying down foundation of various Islamic Schools of Thought who were in agreement with Ibn ‘Umar on the issue of rebellion and sedition and some of his views implicitly became part of Muslim Creed in the following centuries.

6.1.1 Ibn ‘Umar’s Position among the Companions

The battles fought during the period of unrest were a tragedy in Islamic history that caused thousands of human casualties. However, most of the companions held a different perspective about these political battles in contrast to the general public. According to some reports, the total number of companions living in this catastrophic period was about ten thousand but less than a hundred companions (i.e., one percent) actually took part in these battles.⁷⁶⁵ Whereas other reports suggest their number hardly reached to a meagre of thirty or forty (less than one percent).⁷⁶⁶ A recent comprehensive study carried out by Fu’ād Jabalī concludes that this number was 167 (1.67 percent)⁷⁶⁷ maintaining the fact mentioned in the reports that a very small minority was involved in *fitan* wars. This consensus of *ṣaḥābah* upon non-participation in political conflicts later provided the basis of prohibition of rebellion among *Ahl al-Sunnah* (see also 6.2.2). Ibn ‘Umar won special distinction among this majority on many grounds but it does not mean that he was superior to others. Rather it means that owing to his particular circumstances during *fitan*, he found greater opportunity for making efforts in establishing peace.

The first element is Ibn ‘Umar’s historical placement amongst the companions. This means that Ibn ‘Umar had witnessed the early Islamic history in Mecca and Medina,⁷⁶⁸ as well as, both waves of *fitan* events. Due to longevity of life, he had been an eyewitness to the whole ordeal of the early Muslims as a youth and later had been around to see the battles of unrest (*fitan*) as a mature senior citizen. Most of the senior companions had already passed away by that time and there was no one else amongst the emigrant companions except him who was present in

⁷⁶⁵ al-Khallāl, *al-Sunnah*, 728.

⁷⁶⁶ Ibid, 728; Ma‘mar, *al-Jāmi‘*, no. 20735; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no.8358.

⁷⁶⁷ Fu’ād Jabalī, “Companions of the Prophet”, 218, 243-244.

⁷⁶⁸ As for instance, he was there to see his father’s conversion to Islam, the religious oppression against Muslims in Mecca, the migration to Medina and the like (see chapter two).

the second wave of *fitan* and the crushing revolt in Mecca against ‘Abd al-Malik.⁷⁶⁹ This historical placement gave him the privilege to witness and participate as negotiator in most of the *fitan* incidents in addition to the early Islamic history that made his stance relatively more influential.

A second aspect is that Ibn ‘Umar was not only a pupil of senior companions and taught by them, but also one of them and their companion, because he had been a part of the Meccan and early Medinan periods. This gave him an edge amongst the junior lot of the companions especially those involved in the second wave of *fitan*. To the juniors, he was their companion-cum-mentor. He was an eyewitness to all the incidents which the junior companions were deprived of.

The third aspect is related to the geographical significance of his residence. After emigration to Medina in childhood, he spent hither the rest of his life. Here ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom took place and ‘Alī set off for the battle of the Camel. He was present in Medina when the city rebelled against Yazīd and a subsequent massacre took place. He was also present during most of the *fitan* incidents that took place outside Medina. For example, he was there in the arbitration that took place between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya at Dumat al-Jandal⁷⁷⁰ and also in the solidarity agreement between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya. He tried to stop Imām Ḥusayn both in Mecca and Medina. More so, he was in Mecca when the second wave of *fitan* events took place.

⁷⁶⁹ Here a point may be raised that there were many other companions who died after Ibn ‘Umar, e.g., Jābir b. ‘Abd Allah (d. 78/687), Anas b. Mālik (d. 93/709), Abū Ṭufayl ‘Āmir b. Wāthila (d. 102/721) or numerous other companions who were Ibn ‘Umar’s peers like Ibn ‘Abbās (d. 68/687), etc. There is a very clear-cut, obvious answer to this objection: first, those companions who passed away after Ibn ‘Umar like Jābir, Anas and Abū Ṭufayl, none of them were Qurayshi émigré. They had neither any experience with the Prophet in Mecca nor were they relatively influential. As far as Ibn ‘Abbās is concerned, he was born just three years prior to the Prophet’s migration. So, his migration and acceptance of Islam had taken place a little earlier before the conquest of Mecca. Besides, in the early days of the second wave of unrest, he had already lost his eyesight and hence could not pass a very active life in his later years. Moreover, he breathed his last during the second wave of unrest. Likewise, the companion, ‘Amr b. Ḥurayth (d. 85/705) happened to be born during the days of the battle of Badr and was amongst the junior lot (of companions). Therefore, these companions hereby have not been focused on the subject under discussion.

⁷⁷⁰ Ibn ‘Umar participated in Mu‘āwiya’s both peace treaties: with Caliph ‘Alī in 37/657 and with Imām Ḥasan in 41/661. One of these participations was on the counsel of his sister, Ḥafṣa. Scholars differ on which one of these two occasions Ḥafṣa advised him to partake. For details see sub-chapter 3.3.2.

The fourth aspect is Ibn ‘Umar’s tribal affiliation which was not from two of the most influential branches of the Quraysh (the Hashemites and the Umayyads). It had numerous effects. For instance, he was less swayed by tribal influence which had enabled him to view political issues objectively with superior understanding. His objectivity is added on by more significance as he had kept himself strictly away from political and administrative positions and served voluntarily in the non-political arena (for details, see: chapters two-four). His selfless service, insightful knowledge based on deep acuity and his hands-on experience had turned him into a unique personality of his time.

A fifth aspect is that Ibn ‘Umar’s non-participation in the *fitan* battles was not such that he became completely detached from the events of the war as Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ or other companions had done. On the contrary, he took part in all the events and strove to put an end to war or replace violence and bloodshed with peace and harmony. In other words, he was not a passive person but proactive during all these events. Thus, it may be seen that his activities, performances, and reactions almost upon all happenings are recorded.

Therefore, though there was a general consensus of companions upon non-participation in *fitan* wars but due to the above stated reasons, Ibn ‘Umar enjoyed a leading role in peacekeeping which was later recognized and acknowledged by key figures of Muslim societies. The popularity of Ibn ‘Umar’s stance and its impact shall be discussed in the lines below.

6.1.2 Ibn ‘Umar’s Acknowledged Stance during the Time of the Companions

Comments of numerous companions reveal the distinctive role and character role of Ibn ‘Umar in *fitan*. He seems to have won a prominent place amidst the senior companions in his youth since the days of the Prophet. For example, a key senior companion of the Prophet, ‘Abd Allāh b. Mas‘ūd (d. 32/650), who according to some traditions was the sixth person to embrace Islam,⁷⁷¹ has reportedly said these words, ‘‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar exercised self-restraint most of all amongst the youth of Quraysh’.⁷⁷² The same comment has been reported in other words, ‘I have observed companions closely when they were present in thriving numbers that none of us had self-control from worldly pleasures better than Ibn ‘Umar’.⁷⁷³ This anecdote is very important and sheds light on Ibn ‘Umar’s solid character; he was not the type to be easily influenced by the outsiders or to give up on what he knows the true.

⁷⁷¹ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 32233, 33880, 36602; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 5368.

⁷⁷² Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 1701; Abū Nu‘aym, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, I, 294.

⁷⁷³ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 211; Ibn Ḥajar, *al-Iṣābah*, IV, 157.

Ibn ‘Umar retained his distinct place after the demise of the Prophet. For instance, another senior companion Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān (d. 36/656), who is better known as the confidant of the Prophet, commented on ‘Umar and his son, Ibn ‘Umar in these words, ‘When we bid adieu to the Prophet upon his death, at that time we were quite sizable. However, there was none amongst us who did not have one or another flaw except for ‘Umar and Ibn ‘Umar’.⁷⁷⁴ Hudhayfah's opinion on Ibn ‘Umar is significant as Hudhayfah was deemed as an authority on *fitan* for deep understanding.⁷⁷⁵

Since both the above-mentioned companions were not present in the years of *fitan*, therefore it is necessary to seek opinion from the companions present in later times. In this context, the fourth caliph, ‘Alī’s name holds vital importance. Ibn ‘Umar had taken ‘Alī’s oath of allegiance on the condition that he would not take part in the mutual wars of Muslims. Likewise, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqās also remained aloof. ‘Alī’s comment on both is reported as follows, ‘Sa‘d and Ibn ‘Umar have an eminent and distinguished place. If they have erred by not taking part in these battles, then surely it is a minor and condonable lapse. But, if their stance was correct, then they did a meritorious and commendable job’.⁷⁷⁶ This indicates that ‘Alī too had later inclined towards Ibn ‘Umar’s stance (see also subchapter 3.2.3 and 3.2.4).

The next key personality is Abū Mūsā al-Ash‘arī who had embraced Islam in the early days of Islam. He had taken part in both the migrations (to Abyssinia and Medina). He was assigned governorships (of Zabīd, ‘Adan, Basra, and Kufa) in the reigns of the Prophet, ‘Umar and ‘Uthmān. He was an arbiter from the side of ‘Alī after the battle of Ṣiffīn and held Ibn ‘Umar in high esteem which has been discussed in detail in subchapter 3.2.3. During the process of arbitration (*taḥkīm*), he appreciated various aspects of Ibn ‘Umar’s personality. On one occasion, he said, ‘I don’t think that there is a more competent and worthy person (suitable for caliphate) than Ibn ‘Umar (amongst the alternative personalities)’.⁷⁷⁷ On another occasion, he said, ‘By appointing (Ibn ‘Umar) caliph, we shall force the revival of ‘Umar’s era’.⁷⁷⁸ Though

⁷⁷⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 48; Sulaymān b. Aḥmad al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ* [The Middle Dictionary of Prophetic Traditions] (Cairo: Dār al-Ḥaramayn, n.d.), no. 4339; Maḥmūd b. ‘Amr al-Zamakhsharī, *al-Fā’iq fī Gharīb al-Ḥadīth* [The Excellent Explanation of the Unusual Ḥadīth] (Lebanon: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, n.d.), I, 246.

⁷⁷⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, II, 361-369.

⁷⁷⁶ al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Kabīr*, I, 143, no. 319; Ibid, III, 553, IV, 220; al-Haythamī, *Majma‘ al-Zawā’id*, no. VII, 246.

⁷⁷⁷ Ibid, V, 464.

⁷⁷⁸ Ibid, 68.

he himself was senior to Ibn ‘Umar, these words reveal that Abū Mūsā thought that Ibn ‘Umar could rescue the *ummah* from the crisis of *fitan*.

Amongst other key personalities, the view of the Prophet’s esteemed spouse, ‘Ā’isha is of great significance. A detailed account of ‘Ā’isha’s participation in the battle of the Camel has already been discussed in subchapter 3.2.3. It is also mentioned that she later regretted to have taken part in the battle of the Camel. Once, she inquired from Ibn ‘Umar as to why he did not stop her from the battle the way he had stopped his sister Ḥafṣa.⁷⁷⁹ This shows that she too thought Ibn ‘Umar’s approach as more judicious. On another occasion, she said so about him, ‘I have not seen the like of the Prophet’s companions other than those buried in the wool’s shawl (i.e., extreme poverty) except for Ibn ‘Umar’.⁷⁸⁰ If ‘Ā’isha’s words about the battle of the Camel support Ibn ‘Umar’s policies regarding *fitan*, then her last comment approves of his general way of life.

Thus, Ibn ‘Umar retained his estimable place not only in the eyes of the early companions but amongst the later ones too. It has been reported that Abū Hurayra (d. 59/678), ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr (d. 65/684), Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693) along with some other companions held that none of them had been able to maintain himself as they were at the time of the Prophet’s death except for Ibn ‘Umar.⁷⁸¹ The same thing is reported by Jābir b. ‘Abd Allāh (d. 78/697) a bit differently. He said, ‘There is none amongst us who had won prosperity and had not inclined towards it except for ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar’.⁷⁸²

The opinion of ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Amr, Abū Sa‘īd al-Khudrī and Jābir is comparatively more significant as they were present during the second wave of *fitan*, especially Abū Sa‘īd and Jābir who outlived Ibn ‘Umar and witnessed the outcome of all the varied approaches towards *fitan*. These reports apparently shed light on the personal life of Ibn ‘Umar, however, they contain a silent endorsement of his stance that he has done what was required of him.

Ibn ‘Umar’s being singled out by so many companions illustrates that eventually his approach to *fitan* was perceived as the best one. Moreover, what he suggested was the most secure position for individuals and community and based on real Islamic brotherhood. Similarly, the

⁷⁷⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 307-8.

⁷⁸⁰ Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, I, 301.

⁷⁸¹ Ibid, I, 306.

⁷⁸² Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 1699; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6369.

solutions he offered were proved realistic, humanistic, and of uniting nature rather than leading to division and bloodshed.

6.1.3 Successors' (*tābi'ūn*) Endorsement of Ibn 'Umar's Stance

Now an attempt will be made to analyze the opinions of the successors about Ibn 'Umar's position in *fitan*. In this regard, Muhammad b. Ḥanafīyya (d. 81/700) is an important personality. He was a son of Caliph 'Alī and a half-brother of Imām Ḥasan and Imām Ḥusayn. He accompanied his father in *fitan* battles, but after his martyrdom retired from politics like Ibn 'Umar. As is mentioned in subchapter 4.2.3 that Ibn 'Umar scolded those involved to instigate him against Yazīd.⁷⁸³ Likewise, when Ibn 'Umar gave his allegiance to 'Abd al-Malik, Ibn Ḥanafīyya followed him on his request.⁷⁸⁴ A saying of Ibn Ḥanafīyya about Ibn 'Umar reveals his reverence and association with his style and wise approaches to certain issues. He said, 'Ibn 'Umar is the best person of the *ummah*'.⁷⁸⁵ If this short and compact statement is reviewed in the context of *fitan*, it becomes very meaningful, otherwise, there are numerous personalities superior to Ibn 'Umar. However, he may generally be picked as the best role-model in *fitan* times.

'Urwa b. al-Zubayr (d. 94/713) was son of a senior companions, al-Zubayr b. al-'Awwām and Asmā' bint Abī Bakr (half-sister of 'Ā'isha). He was an important traditionist (*muhaddith*), a historian and a member of Seven Jurists of Medina. Birth and early life in Medina helped him quench his thirst for knowledge. Becoming son-in-law of Ibn 'Umar also provided him ample opportunities to learn and grow. However, many key-members of his family were involved in *fitan* events like his father, al-Zubayr, two of his brothers namely 'Abd Allāh and Muṣ'ab and aunt 'Ā'isha. Likewise, his brother 'Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr had a chance of winning caliphate partially in many regions. 'Urwa was thirteen years old when the battle of the Camel occurred. He intended to take part but was returned for being underage like Ibn 'Umar before the battle of Badr. Afterwards, he preferred to stay away from civil wars and even did not take up any designation during the caliphate of his brother. He did not articulate the reason but Ibn 'Umar was the only man in his close circle whom he resembled the most in dealing with *fitan*; especially his conscious choice of staying away from government positions and non-supportive attitude with his family members on political battles.

⁷⁸³ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 48.

⁷⁸⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1851; *Ibid*, VI,259, VIII, 255-256, 173-175.

⁷⁸⁵ al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6371; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, III, 212.

‘Ā’isha must have influenced ‘Urwa’s leaning towards Ibn ‘Umar as she herself inclined to his stance after the battle of the Camel (see subchapter 6.1.2). ‘Urwa probably learnt this from his aunt about Ibn ‘Umar before marrying his daughter and this relation with Ibn ‘Umar must have increased his reliance on his stance. Apart from ‘Ā’isha, ‘Urwa used to frequently consult Ibn ‘Umar in personal matters. For example, once he said to him, ‘We are in the company of our leaders in power, and we deliberately support and praise their wrongdoing. What is your opinion on this?’ Ibn ‘Umar replied, ‘We used to regard it as hypocrisy in the time of the Prophet. Now we do not know what you think of it.’⁷⁸⁶ It is another example of Ibn ‘Umar’s solid character and straightforwardness. He cannot mumble and directly says whatever the truth is. This experience must have been a cause of ‘Urwa’s distance from the authorities.

The anecdote about ‘Urwa’s proposal to marry Ibn ‘Umar’s daughter is very interesting. He asked Ibn ‘Umar during *hajj*, but Ibn ‘Umar remained silent. On his return, Ibn ‘Umar called him and said, ‘You asked for my daughter when we were seeing ourselves in God’s presence in the holy places (ونحن نتراءى الله بين أعيننا).’ Then he reconfirmed ‘Urwa’s interest and gave him her hand.⁷⁸⁷ Living in the same city also strengthened their close connection.

The next key personality amongst the followers is Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94/715). He was a great scholar of *ḥadīth*, one of the Seven Jurists of Medina, and a noteworthy judge. Beside a prestigious family background, he was also the son-in-law of a famous companion Abū Hurayra. He was taught by numerous notable companions. Owing to these qualities, he was named as the ‘head of the followers’.⁷⁸⁸ Sa‘īd’s academic learning and influence was such that ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz would not take a decision till he had sought advice from him during his governorship over Medina (87/706 – 92/711).⁷⁸⁹

Sa‘īd was taught by Ibn ‘Umar too especially he learnt about the legal opinions (*fatāwā*) made by his father, ‘Umar so much so that he won expertise in it.⁷⁹⁰ As a scholar, Sa‘īd’s lifestyle was not of a complete withdrawal from political affairs, and he would support people in good and criticize them in bad. Consequently, he remained under the wrath of rulers on several

⁷⁸⁶ al-Faswī, *al-Ma‘rifah wa al-Tārīkh*, I, 377.

⁷⁸⁷ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, no. IV, 167; al-Fākihī, *Akhbār Makkah*, no. 339.

⁷⁸⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, V, 124-139.

⁷⁸⁹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 382; Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, LXXIV, 24.

⁷⁹⁰ “Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib”, *al-‘Itihād*, 25/08/2011, <<https://www.alittihad.ae/article/79186/2011/>> , accessed on: 29/03/2021.

occasions⁷⁹¹ very much like Ibn ‘Umar. The resemblance is so deep that ‘Sa‘īd seems Ibn ‘Umar of *tabi‘ūn* version’ and a reflection of Ibn ‘Umar’s personality may be seen in him. Its evidence is perhaps the saying of Ibn al-Musayyib upon the death of Ibn ‘Umar, ‘The day Ibn ‘Umar passed away, there was none dearer to me on the face of the Earth than him so much that I yearn to see God with such deeds as he did’.⁷⁹² This shows that Ibn ‘Umar had become an example for the next generation. Sa‘īd also said, ‘If I were to testify about someone being in heaven, then definitely I would have sworn on behalf of Ibn ‘Umar’.⁷⁹³ Many other examples of Ibn ‘Umar’s influence on him can also be found, e.g., not swearing allegiance to Ibn al-Zubayr after Yazīd; Allegiance to ‘Abd al-Malik after Ibn al-Zubayr’s martyrdom; refusal to give allegiance to al-Walīd as crown prince in the life of his father Caliph ‘Abd al-Malik, etc. Ibn al-Musayyib had an honorable position in the reign of Ibn ‘Umar’s nephew ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (a detailed discussion on him shall follow in the coming pages).

‘Alī b. Ḥusayn (d. 95/713) is another prominent figure. His noble family background, moral and religious values, and scholarly position have lifted his stature amongst Sunnite and Shiite scholars both. He is known by many titles owing to his merits like Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn, al-Sajjād, etc. His life was full of trials and tribulations. He was merely two-year-old when his paternal grandfather, ‘Alī was martyred. A few months later, his uncle, Imām Ḥasan abdicated from caliphate. He was accompanying his father, Imām Ḥusayn, in Karbala wherein all his male family members were martyred. He could not take part in the battle due to severe illness and later kept distance from civil wars. He was an eyewitness to all tragic incidents of the second wave of *fitan* and Ibn ‘Umar’s unwavering stance remained before him throughout. It has already passed in subchapter 4.2.2 how Ibn ‘Umar had tried his utmost to dissuade Imām Ḥusayn from leaving for Kufa. Imām Zayn al-‘Ābidīn must have witnessed and deliberated over all these incidents. In the same context, if Imām’s saying ‘Verily Ibn ‘Umar was the most devout one who always upheld the most judicious viewpoint’⁷⁹⁴ is considered then it looks as if he was upholding his stance on *fitan*. He seems to believe had Ibn ‘Umar’s standpoint prevailed, things would have been different.

The next significant personality is Mūsā b. Ṭalḥa (d. 103/722), son of a famous companion and member of ‘Umar’s council Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh. Mūsā was born in the last days of the

⁷⁹¹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, V, 124-139.

⁷⁹² Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, I, 304.

⁷⁹³ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntazam*, VI, 134.

⁷⁹⁴ al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6372.

Prophet's life or shortly thereafter. He closely witnessed *fitan* battles a teenager and died about thirty years after Ibn 'Umar at the beginning of the second Islamic century. Mūsā was a distinguished traditionist (*muḥaddith*) who had narrated *ḥadīths* on authority of numerous companions.⁷⁹⁵ He was one of the most eloquent orators who strove to inculcate peace, educate and edify people at the grass root level.⁷⁹⁶ He was so much influential that people thought of him 'an awaited Maḥdī (Rightly Guided One)', an eschatological Messianic figure.⁷⁹⁷

Mūsā's father, Ṭalḥa b. 'Ubayd Allāh had fought in the battle of the Camel against 'Alī. However, for the sake of promoting religious and political awareness, unlike his father, he looked up to Ibn 'Umar as his role model. Once he said, 'May Allāh bless 'Abd Allāh b. 'Umar and by God, I think that he abides by the promise with the Prophet that he never became part of any civil strife, nor did he change in the least. By God, Quraysh could not drag him an inch since the foremost wave of unrest'.⁷⁹⁸

It is very strange to see Mūsā propagating the stance of Ibn 'Umar and abandoning the opinion of a father who was more distinguished and senior. That is why, the narrator (of this anecdote) exclaimed with surprise, '(as if, Mūsā) has belittled his father's murder'.⁷⁹⁹ Since Talha went against the advice of Ibn 'Umar and lost his life, therefore, lauding Ibn 'Umar's opinion meant as son being critical of his father's death.

Another personality from the generation of *tābi'ūn* is Mujāhid (d. 104/722), a Meccan scholar of *tafsīr*, *qirā'āt*, *ḥadīth* and *fiqh*. Beside his close relationship with Ibn 'Abbās, he also learnt from Ibn 'Umar and other companions (see also subchapter 2.6). Ibn 'Umar's long stays in Mecca for performing *ḥajj* and *'umrah* regularly must have quenched his thirst for knowledge. Like Ibn 'Umar, Mujāhid was curious about the places mentioned in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth* and would follow them.⁸⁰⁰ His deep attachment to Ibn 'Umar's position on *fitan* is evident from a statement he made, 'When Ibn 'Umar was young, people disregarded him. But after he turned old, they followed his example.'⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁵ al-Bukhārī, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr*, VII, 286-287; al-Mizzī, *Tahzīb al-Kamāl*, XXIX, 82-87.

⁷⁹⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, V, 214.

⁷⁹⁷ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 161-163.

⁷⁹⁸ Nu'aym, *al-Fitan*, I, 158; *Ibid*, IV, 145.

⁷⁹⁹ *Ibid*.

⁸⁰⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 449-57; III, 203-39.

⁸⁰¹ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 147.

Circumstances other than *fitan* cannot become a reasonable background for this interesting statement. Ibn ‘Umar was comparatively a junior companion during the first wave of *fitan* (i.e., the battles of the Camel, Şiffīn, etc.), therefore, people did not pay heed to his advice. But late in the second wave of *fitan*, when he became very old, his words were slowly being heard and acted upon. Reporting an important statement without proper historical context indicates high regard of scholars for the whole community of *ṣaḥābah* and their caution to discuss the differences amongst them. It also exhibits the importance of proper historical context for drawing a meaningful conclusion from similar anecdotes.

The next important personality amongst the followers is Ibn ‘Umar’s son, Sālīm (d. 106/728). Ibn ‘Umar held him dearest amongst his children for his high ethical and spiritual qualities. It is reported that his mother, a concubine of Ibn ‘Umar, originally belonged to a respectable family of Iran⁸⁰² whom he was very fond of. It is also reported that Ibn ‘Umar had closer resemblance to his father than any of his siblings. The same was said about Sālīm who bore likeness to his father more than any of his other children.⁸⁰³ He remained in the company of his father when unpleasant events with Ḥajjāj took place. After one such incident, Ibn ‘Umar kissed his forehead and said, ‘A *shaykh* scholar (Ibn ‘Umar) is kissing another *shaykh* (i.e., Sālīm)’.⁸⁰⁴ This anecdote not only reveals Ibn ‘Umar’s humility of spirit and a father’s fondness for his son but shows how Ibn ‘Umar was keen to transfer his heritage to the young generation. The kiss is emblematic of the same satisfaction (see subchapters 2.5 and 5.2.3.10).

Sālīm played a key role in establishing political stability and helping community through vital services in the fields of religion and education. If on one hand his personal life was an example for simplicity, piety, devoutness, asceticism, deep knowledge and broad understanding then on the other hand, he continued the task of guiding the masses and counseling the rulers.⁸⁰⁵ An impact of his services may be seen during governorship of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz over Medina (87/706 - 92/711) and later in his caliphate (99/717 - 101/720) (refer to the biography of ‘Umar ‘Abd al-‘Azīz). Sālīm’s influence on the Umayyads was so great that their Caliph, Hishām b. ‘Abd al-Malik (d.125/743) led his funeral prayer.⁸⁰⁶

⁸⁰² Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 122.

⁸⁰³ Ibn Sa’d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 150, V, 195; Abū Nu‘aym al-Iṣbahānī, *Ḥilyat al-Awliyā’*, I, 310; Aḥmad Ibn Abī Khaythamah, *al-Tārīkh al-Kabīr* [The Great History] (Cairo: al-Fārūq al-Ḥadītha, 2006), II, 157, no. 2203.

⁸⁰⁴ Ibid, IV, 149, 159, 184.

⁸⁰⁵ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 457-467.

⁸⁰⁶ Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, XX, 69.

Another important personality amongst the followers is Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728) that was not only a great scholar of various disciplines (theology, jurisprudence, exegesis, variant readings, etc.) but he won special distinction in asceticism and Sufism. His spiritual and scholarly maturity was an outcome of his intimate relationship with the companions of the Prophet. During the Umayyad caliphate, only fragments of his speeches could be preserved that are full of eloquence and other rhetorical qualities. If on the one hand, they have become master literary pieces of Arabic literature for their vivid imagery and striking antithesis,⁸⁰⁷ then on the other hand there is hardly any (Islamic) hortatory literature wherein his sayings are not quoted.⁸⁰⁸

After his birth in Medina in 21/642, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī spent almost seventeen years under the tutelage of many companions. Following the battle of Ṣiffīn, he migrated to Basra along with his family in 37/657 and studied until 43/663. He worked as a scribe for Khurasan's governor al-Rabī' b. Ziyād al-Ḥārithī (d. 53/673) from 43/663 to 53/673. Later, he got permanently settled in Basra, won distinction and fame, and died here in 110/728.

Though Ḥasan al-Baṣrī had been educated by many important companions but in the arena of coping with adverse situation, he was a follower of Ibn 'Umar. His remarks about Ibn 'Umar give an impression as if he had a thorough understanding of Ibn 'Umar's conduct during *fitan*. Once he said:

While people were still amidst *fitan*, they called upon Ibn 'Umar and said, 'You are the leader of people, and your father has remained a public leader as well. There is a consensus among people regarding your leadership. Come to the fore so that people may vow on your hand'. (Hearing this) Ibn 'Umar said, 'No, by God till I have a soul in my body, blood will never be shed on my account'. (Ḥasan al-Baṣrī added,) 'Then people came to intimidate him, and he was endorsed, 'You must rise or else shall be killed right on your bed'. (Then Ḥasan al-Baṣrī said,) 'Thus, verily by God, these people could not cause the slightest of harm to Ibn 'Umar till he met with his Lord'.⁸⁰⁹ (Some traditions report thus,) 'He (i.e., Ibn 'Umar) was intimidated and was given lavish offers'.⁸¹⁰

⁸⁰⁷ Muhammad b. Yazīd al-Mubarrad, *al-Kāmil fī al-Lughah wa al-Adab* [The Perfect Book on Arabic Language and Literature] (Cairo: Dār al-Faīkr, 1997), I, 169; Ṣafwat, *Jamharat Khuṭub al-'Arab*, II, 500.

⁸⁰⁸ Ritter, H., "Ḥasan al-Baṣrī", *EI2*, Consulted online on 29 March 2021, <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/10.1163/1573-3912_islam_COM_0273>.

⁸⁰⁹ Abū Nu'aym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, I, 293.

⁸¹⁰ Ibn Sa'd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 15; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā'il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 1702.

The above report reveals that though Ḥasan al-Baṣrī himself was not present in Medina, but he was completely aware of Ibn ‘Umar’s position throughout those turbulent years. In addition, he succinctly summed up the incidents. If the last three decades of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s life are studied, which falls under the Umayyad dynasty, it appears as if he followed Ibn ‘Umar’s footsteps diligently.

Two significant rebellions against the Umayyads took place while Ḥasan al-Baṣrī was in Basra. The first was by ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. al-Ash‘ath (d. 85/704) and the second by Yazīd b. al-Muhallab (d. 102/720). The Iraqi jurists were actively engaged to overthrow the Umayyads during this period, such as Sa‘īd b. Jubayr (d. 95/714) who was ruthlessly killed by Ḥajjāj.⁸¹¹ In those days, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī played the same role in Basra that Ibn ‘Umar had played in Medina and Mecca. The way he condemned the rebels, explicated, and enlightened them about the ill effects of a coup d’état; the way he criticized the Umayyad politics; the manner he treated Ḥajjāj was a ditto copy of Ibn ‘Umar’s conduct. There are numerous incidents that bear a remarkable similarity between the conduct of the two. As for instance, Ibn ‘Umar alluded to the post-revolt massacre in Medina (the incident of *Harrah*) as a direct consequence of breaking allegiance of ‘Uthmān.⁸¹² Likewise, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī deemed corrupt rulers as an outcome of the Muslims’ sins.⁸¹³

Apparently, there is no disparity between the two and Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s stance seems to be an extension of Ibn ‘Umar’s. An examination of Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s comments on Ibn ‘Umar along with a review of his life during civil wars in Basra makes it obvious that he formulated principles keeping Ibn ‘Umar’s example before him that eventually evolved into the *Ahl al-Sunnah*’ viewpoint on *fitan* (which is going to be discussed in subchapter 6.2).

The next important follower is Nāfi‘ (d. 117/726), a freed slave of Ibn ‘Umar who remained under his care and tutelage for a long time. Owing to this extended association, he had become an authority on Ibn ‘Umar’s scholarship. Imām Mālik used to say, ‘If Nāfi‘ has said something (about Ibn ‘Umar), then reckon it authentic instantly (no need of further verification)’.⁸¹⁴ Nāfi‘

⁸¹¹ Muḥammad Yusrī, “Ḥarrām al-Thawrah ‘alā al-Ḥukkām al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī.. [al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī Declared Rebellion Unlawful]” *Raṣīf*, published: 05/11/2020, <<https://raseef22.net/article/1079909>>, accessed: 24/02/2022.

⁸¹² Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 242.

⁸¹³ “Mawqif al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī min al-Fitnah [al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī’s Perspective of Fitnah]”, *Islamfacilepourtous*, accessed: 24/02/2022, <<https://sites.google.com/site/islamfacilepourtous/hommes/tabii/alhassan-albasry/fitan#sdfootnote2anc>>

⁸¹⁴ Ibn ‘Asākar, *Tārīkh Dimashq*, LXI, 432.

had recorded his reports from Ibn ‘Umar in a notebook that his disciples used to read from.⁸¹⁵ Besides his education and training, Ibn ‘Umar had also married him off.⁸¹⁶ This special relationship with Ibn ‘Umar opened up avenues of success for him. Those who were inclined towards Ibn ‘Umar’s stance, they availed his services for the promotion of religious education and propagation of Ibn ‘Umar’s views. As for instance, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz appointed him as an in-charge for the Yemen’s charitable trust money. Also, he sent him to Egypt to educate Muslims sunnah of the Prophet.⁸¹⁷ Ibn ‘Umar’s reference became so important that ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz (who himself was a supporter of his views) promoted those people who had been close to Nāfi‘. Ibn ‘Umar’s standpoint also became famous among the disciples of Nāfi‘. Its specimens may be viewed among the next generation scholars, for example: Imām Mālik, Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778) and Ayūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/749) (see subchapter 6.1.4).

There is an important anecdote that sheds light on the life of the youths of the Quraysh during the wars of *fitan*. It presents Ibn ‘Umar as a role-model in a cautious and uncritical way. It is reported by two narrators: ‘Amir al-Sha‘abī (d. 103/723) and Abū al-Zinād (d. 130/748). Al-Sha‘abī was a well-known jurist, traditionist (*muḥaddith*) and a historian of Kufa⁸¹⁸ whereas, Abū al-Zinād was a prominent jurist of Medīna⁸¹⁹ and a key narrator of *fitan* incidents. He has narrated as many as twenty-five traditions on *fitan* in *al-Sunan al-Wāridah fī al-Fitan*.⁸²⁰ A summary of this anecdote Ibn ‘Umar is as follows:

Before the *fitan* wars started, a few Qurayshī young men (‘Abd Allāh b. al-Zubayr, Muṣ‘ab b. al-Zubayr, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar) gathered in the Ka‘ba and prayed for individual favors. All the three young men besought worldly gains but Ibn ‘Umar implored for success in life hereafter. By chance, all of them witnessed *fitan* incidents. The first three took part in these battles and fulfilled their yearnings whereas Ibn ‘Umar stayed away from fighting over the caliphate and forbade others too.

⁸¹⁵ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 342.

⁸¹⁶ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 460.

⁸¹⁷ Abū Zur‘ah, *al-Tārīkh*, 628.

⁸¹⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 293-300.

⁸¹⁹ Ibid, VI, 161.

⁸²⁰ ‘Uthmān b. Sa‘īd al-Dānī, *al-Sunan al-Wāridah fī al-Fitan* [Prophetic Traditions about *Fitan*] (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āshima, n.d.).

After a mention of this anecdote the narrators (ʿĀmir al-Shaʿbī and Abū al-Zinād) added that the way the entreaties of the first three young men were answered and they were blessed with their desired government designations, it may be hoped that God would have blessed Ibn ʿUmar with His mercy and have rewarded him with Jannah.⁸²¹

This is apparently an insignificant report, however, the disciples of Ibn ʿUmar (al-Shaʿabī and Abū al-Zinād) were endorsing their audience and readership that Ibn ʿUmar had an edge over the others and presented his conduct as a standard example. The civil wars among the first three personalities (Ibn al-Zubayr, Muṣʿab and ʿAbd al-Malik) took thousands of human lives. Likewise, Ibn al-Zubayr and Muṣʿab got killed and time proved that Ibn ʿUmar's stance was correct. It was also a personal experience for al-Shaʿabī. He was part of mutiny against Ḥajjāj but with the passage of time he realized his mistake. Consequently, he changed his mind and adopted Ibn ʿUmar's opinion.⁸²²

Ṭāwūs b. Kaysān (d. 106/724), another famous follower (*tābi ʿī*) of Yemen, was taught by Ibn ʿAbbās and fifty other companions including Ibn ʿUmar. Ṭāwūs was deeply inspired by him and like him he won distinction in asceticism (*zuhd*). He used to say about Ibn ʿUmar:

I have not seen a person more pious than Ibn ʿUmar who used to say so in his prostrations, 'O Allāh! You know that nothing impedes me from aspiring for the world (caliphate) and bear down resistance of the Quraysh, nothing else but your fear.'⁸²³

It is remarkable that Ṭāwūs is linking Ibn ʿUmar's piety with his abstention from the *fitan* battles. Since these battles were fought amongst the Qurayshī youths to win caliphate, Ibn ʿUmar abstained himself from these battles by looking at its adverse religious and worldly outcomes. Hence, this far-sighted approach is deemed as *asceticism* by Ṭāwūs. It may, therefore, be concluded that when many companions and followers describe Ibn ʿUmar with attributes like: abstinence (*zuhd*), piety (*taqwā*) and disinclination to the world, they actually allude towards his stance of non-participation in *fitan* battles. They used allusions and metaphors lest their clear words should not be censured and taken as criticism for those involved in these battles.

⁸²¹ Abū Nuʿaym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā*, I, 309; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VI, 134-135.

⁸²² Ibn Saʿd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, VI, 249.

⁸²³ Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓam*, VI, 134.

It may also be noticed that every single great personality from *tabi'ūn* generation gets something from Ibn 'Umar in accordance with his own socio-religious context. Here we have Ṭāwūs who spiritualizes Ibn 'Umar's stance and read it heavily in a religious-ethical framework. Thus, Ibn 'Umar is a source of inspiration for all no matter whatever background they come from.

The Palestinian scholar and the political advisor of the Umayyad rulers, Rajā' b. Ḥaywa (d. 112/730) who succeeded in convincing Sulaymān b. 'Abd al-Malik to appoint 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz as the next caliph, he considered a renowned Syrian scholar and pious personality 'Abd Allāh b. Muḥayrīz (d. 99/718) as an emblem of peace. Contrarily, Ibn Muḥayrīz considered Ibn 'Umar as an icon of peace.⁸²⁴ Ibn Muḥayrīz was a *tābi'ī* (follower) and narrated numerous *ḥadīths* on authority of the companions except Ibn 'Umar. His remark about Ibn 'Umar without having met him shows that he had heard a lot about him and his stance. The fact that a great personality like Rajā' called Ibn Muḥayrīz, a symbol of peace shows that Ibn Muḥayrīz was rendering valuable services for peace. While Ibn Muḥayrīz's description of Ibn 'Umar as an icon of peace shows how Ibn 'Umar was influencing the influencers.

Here another key fact may be highlighted that a niece of Ibn 'Umar was married to the governor to Egypt, 'Abd al-'Azīz b. Marwān. One of their sons was 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz who later became caliph and has more significance than any other Muslim ruler after the Rashidūn caliphate. He held cordial relations with his uncle Ibn 'Umar and then his son, Sālim.

Ibn 'Umar's companionship with 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz most probably dated from the last days of the second wave of unrest (60/680 – 73/693) as the latter was born (61/681) in the second year of Yazīd's era (60/680 - 64/683). He was either thirteen or fourteen when Ibn 'Umar passed away in 73/693. As a royal prince, an association with his devoutly religious uncle must have been a spiritual experience. He often expressed his wish to be like Ibn 'Umar that convinced his mother to leave him for a while with Ibn 'Umar.⁸²⁵ He must have heard engaging anecdotes of uncle (Ibn 'Umar) and grandfather ('Umar b. al Khaṭṭāb) from his mother or close circle.⁸²⁶

The childhood desire to be like Ibn 'Umar was fulfilled in the youth of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz

⁸²⁴ al-Faswī, *al-Ma'rifa wa al-Tārīkh*, I, 366.

⁸²⁵ 'Abd Allah Ibn 'Abd al-Ḥakam al-Miṣrī, *Ṣīrat 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz 'lā mā rawāh al-Imām Mālik b. Anas wa Aṣḥābuh* [Life of 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz] (Beirut: 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1984), 23-24.

⁸²⁶ Ibid.

after he propagated and applied the teachings of Ibn ‘Umar on governorship and caliphate. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz served in administrative positions unlike Ibn ‘Umar, therefore, he is often compared to his caliph grandfather, ‘Umar. However, as is mentioned in chapters three-five that Ibn ‘Umar declined three offers of ascension for the sake of certain principles, whereas ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz could observe them due to his particular circumstances. This shows that he had retained the role-model of his childhood.

Ibn ‘Umar opposed the political practices of the Umayyads, but he did not hold radical views to overthrow their monarchy and replace it with Islamic caliphate. Rather he believed in molding the system through peaceful measures. Contrary to revolting efforts, this approach proved more acceptable and such people rose from amongst the Umayyads who wanted to reform the Umayyad politics. The reign of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is considered the pinnacle point of this struggle. He was earlier appointed as governor of Medina and later given charge of Hijaz in 87/706. His achievements included appointment of a ten-member council of Medinan scholars. He would not make any decision without their approval. Three members of this committee had a direct relation with Ibn ‘Umār. Two were his sons: Sālim and ‘Abd Allāh and the third was his son in law, ‘Urwa.⁸²⁷ ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was about twenty-six years of age at that time⁸²⁸ and too young to make such decisions. It is probable that Ibn ‘Umar’s son Sālim instigated him to take this step. Ibn ‘Umar’s influence in the formation of the council of Medinan scholars is supported by a thirty-year-old incident (battle of the Camel) when he advised both the rival parties to consult the eminent personalities of Medina. Similarly, he himself was part of the council (*shūrā*) made by Caliph ‘Umar for the selection of the next caliph.

There are other aspects of Ibn ‘Umar’s influence upon ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz. For example, during his governorship over Medina, many people escaped from the atrocities of Ḥajjāj, the Umayyads’ governor in Iraq, and took refuge in Medina. Both were Umayyad’s governor but ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s humanity and peace-loving character (because of his upbringing and influence of Ibn ‘Umar) were incomparable with Ḥajjāj’s cruel treatment.

‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz held great influence over Caliph ‘Abd Malik’s children: Walīd and Sulaymān, the future caliphs. Sulaymān is also reported to have accompanied Ibn ‘Umar⁸²⁹ and

⁸²⁷ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 257.

⁸²⁸ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, VI, 427-428.

⁸²⁹ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 201; Ibn Manẓūr, *Mukhtaṣar Tārīkh Dimashq*, X, 170.

one who later facilitated ascension of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz to caliphate. Ibn ‘Umar also hoped for such a ruler during his last years;⁸³⁰ hence, he seems to work very hard to influence or more correctly to educate the future leaders. His indirect activities with the Palace were finally giving fruits. Similar examples can be found in later Muslim history, such as Imām Rabbānī (d. 1624), who witnessed the serious problems in Akbar the Great’s (d. 1605) understanding of religion, approached to his sons to train them religiously.⁸³¹

‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz ascended to caliphate in 99/717 by the same method which prevailed in the Umayyads that did not regard public opinion. After appointment, he took to pulpit and addressed thus, ‘I have been appointed your caliph without my consent. Therefore, I abdicate, and you may choose the caliph yourselves’. People cried unanimously that they are happy with his leadership. He was not satisfied and wrote to the provinces for his oath of allegiance subject to the condition of public consent.

As mentioned in chapters three-five that Ibn ‘Umar repeatedly refused ascension without public consent.⁸³² ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz was about forty when he took charge as caliph. He had spent precious moments with Ibn ‘Umar and also with his son Sālim. It can, therefore, be argued that his fulfilment of the obligatory condition of public consent was triggered by the advice he learned from the council. It may be observed here that Ibn ‘Umar was not fully heard during the period of *fitan* battles, but in the days of amity and peace, he was not only heard but his views flourished, and his principles were applied by the rulers. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz is the first caliph after *fitan*, who really captured Ibn ‘Umar’s vision and put it into practice.

Through the disciples of Ibn ‘Umar, the Umayyads, under the leadership of ‘Umar the second, find an opportunity to reconcile with the people who had remained under political oppression for a long time. Hence, Ibn ‘Umar’s strong legacy for peace building continues even after his death. ‘Irāk b. Mālīk al-Ghifārī (d. 104/722), a disciple of Ibn ‘Umar, was one of those who advised ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz not to repeat the same Umayyad cruelty.⁸³³ This shows that Ibn ‘Umar’s vision was successfully transferred to the next generations.

By viewing towering personalities like Sālim, ‘Abd Allāh (two sons of Ibn ‘Umar), Ibn

⁸³⁰ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, VII, 191; Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, IX, 201.

⁸³¹ Iqbal Sabir, *The Life and Times of Shaikh Ahmad Sirhindi*, PhD Dissertation, (Aligarh: Aligarh Muslim University, 1990), 266-312

⁸³² al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 563, V, 72; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 489, IV, 217; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 464.

⁸³³ al-Mizzī, *Tahzīb al-Kamāl*, XIX, 545-49.

Muḥayrīz, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, ‘Irāk, Nāfi‘, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (see the next personality) and others, one may conclude that Ibn ‘Umar had a deep influence over these influential personalities of that time. All these succeeded to develop a network and worked together to revert to the Islamic mode of governance from the tribal one. ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz’s coming to power and finding such a group of righteous people bespeaks of Ibn ‘Umar’s patient and successful efforts.

The next significant follower, *muhaddith*, historian and the founder of the discipline of *sīrah* is Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (d. 124/741). He was also amongst the fans of Ibn ‘Umar. Ibn Shihāb’s father was an associate of Ibn al-Zubayr during the battles of *fitan*, but he himself stayed away from these wars. The main reason is reported to be the influence of his teachers whose care had groomed and disciplined him. Ibn Shihāb had a deep-set relationship with those people who had been close to Ibn ‘Umar. For example, it is said about his cordial relationship with Ibn ‘Umar’s son, Sālim that ‘he was his conjunct (كان يلزمه)’.⁸³⁴ Likewise, Ibn ‘Umar’s disciple, Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib and his son-in-law, ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr were his key mentors. Once Ibn Shihāb addressed his disciple, Imām Mālik b. Anas (more details about him will come later) thus, ‘(O Mālik!) You should never shun Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion. He outlived the Prophet for six decades and nothing of the Prophet or his companions was hidden from him’.⁸³⁵

This opinion of a prominent scholar from the generation of the successors (*tābi‘ūn*) is very significant. Though it opines in general terms that Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on any issue pertaining to Islam carries more weightage than anyone else, however, if it is taken in the context of *fitan*, then it turns more meaningful and judicious. This saying simultaneously clarifies two aspects: One, Ibn ‘Umar’s life had this rare distinction that no historical event from the lives of the Prophet or his companions was shielded from him. He entered in the fold of Islam with his father ‘Umar in the early Meccan period. The whole of Medinan period of the Prophet was before him. Later he saw the whole of Rashidun caliphate and the next 30 years of the Umayyad era. This is such a long experience that excepting him no one else could gain it. Some who had embraced Islam in the early period could not survive in the later years and those present in the latter era were deprived of the initial Islamic history (see also subchapter 6.1.1). Thus, Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion was based on his long experience that has no substitute. Secondly, Ibn Shihāb was criticized for keeping ties with the court of the Umayyads but when it is perceived through

⁸³⁴ Ibn Sa‘īd, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 388.

⁸³⁵ al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 6363.

Ibn ‘Umar’s lens of moderate policy, it may seem a meaningful approach. The *ummah* gleaned many fruitful results due to these ties. For example, the compilation of *ḥadīth* was carried out in a more organized way and Ibn Shihāb was a principal figure whom Caliph ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz assigned this task.⁸³⁶ The caliph held Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī in high esteem and advised people to benefit from him.⁸³⁷ Ibn Shihāb is, therefore, remembered as the first editor of *ḥadīth* and knowledge.⁸³⁸

One such personality is ‘Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/744) who was a famous Meccan jurist, traditionist and a freed slave (*mawlā*) of Ibn ‘Umar’s mother’s tribe Banū Jumaḥ. He had remained the student of many *ṣaḥābah* including Ibn ‘Umar. Like him, he was very careful in the narration of *ḥadīth* and often refused to answer questions of his students.⁸³⁹ His comment on Ibn ‘Umar’s expertise of *fitan* has already been mentioned, ‘Ibn ‘Umar was counted amongst the scholars of *fitan*’ (see chapter 1.2).⁸⁴⁰

6.1.4 Popularity of Ibn ‘Umar’s Views amongst the Followers of the Successors (*Tābi ‘ū al-Tābi ‘īn*)

After the generation of the successors, their followers fall next in stratum. Amongst them, Imām Mālik (d. 179/795) is an important personality under the sway of Ibn ‘Umar. Besides being an iconic traditionist (*muḥaddith*), he was the *Imām* of Mālikī juristic school. Some discussion of Ibn ‘Umar’s influence on him in the areas of *ḥadīth* and jurisprudence has already passed in subchapters 2.6 and 3.2.2. A renowned Indian scholar, Shāh Walī Allāh has discussed the influence of Ibn ‘Umar on Imām Mālik and his juristic school in these words, ‘Imām Mālik’s prime basis of jurisprudence is the sayings of the Prophet and then ‘Umar’s verdicts. After that he has relied on Ibn ‘Umar’s edicts, and thereafter the proclamations of all the companions and the people of Medina’.⁸⁴¹ Shāh Walī gives its reasons thus, ‘the basis for adopting (specifically)

⁸³⁶ Yūsuf b. ‘Abd Allah Ibn ‘Abd al-Barr al-Qurṭubī, *Jāmi‘ Bayān al-‘Ilm wa Faḍlih* [Importance of Knowledge] (Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn al-Jawzī, 1994), I, 331.

⁸³⁷ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Muḥammad Ibn Abī Ḥātim, *al-Jarḥ wa al-Ta’dīl* [Critical Evaluation of Ḥadīth Narrators] (Beirut: Dār Iḥyā’ al-Turāth al-‘Arabī, 1952), II, 18.

⁸³⁸ Aḥmad b. ‘Alī Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī fī Sharḥ Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī* [Grant of the Creator, a Commentary of *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*] (Beirut: Dār al-Ma‘rifah, 1959), I, 208.

⁸³⁹ al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, V, 300-307; Harald Motzki, “‘Amr b. Dīnār”, *EI3*, Edited by: Kate Fleet, Gudrun Krämer, Denis Matringe, John Nawas, Everett Rowson, accessed on 15 March 2022.

⁸⁴⁰ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, II, 285.

⁸⁴¹ Aḥmad Walī Allāh Ibn ‘Abd ar-Raḥīm Dehlawī, *al-Maswā Sharḥ al-Muwatta’* [Commentary of Imām Mālik’s *al-Mawatta’*] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1983), 31-32.

Ibn ‘Umar’s conduct is that all the senior companions have unanimously testified his perseverance (taking the oath of allegiance of Caliph ‘Alī without involving himself in battles) and his superiority over the rest of the companions (amongst the survivors of *fitan*).⁸⁴² Imām Mālik was born twenty years after the death of Ibn ‘Umar but he received education from Nāfi‘ and ‘Amr b. Dīnār, intimate disciples of Ibn ‘Umar. He has mentioned himself how he would diligently inquire about Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion on various topics.⁸⁴³

Ibn ‘Umar has greatly influenced Imām Mālik in his dealing with *fitan*. Imām’s age was full of political conflicts too. The first half of his life coincided with the last four decades of the Umayyad caliphate and rebellions against them were in full swing. Likewise, efforts were made to overthrow the Abbasid caliphate after its establishment in 132/750. Muhammad al-Nafs al-Zakiyya (d. 145/762)’s insurgency in Medina is a notable event in this regard. Imām Mālik had never endorsed uprisings despite injustices of these caliphates. However, he would not remain silent and follow a passive resistance. Once he gave an edict in accordance with ‘Alī’s opinion that ‘a forced divorce is not effectual’. The rebels active against the Abbasids misused the edict in their interest that ‘a forced allegiance is not binding’. As a result, Imām was punished with lashes for a crime he had not committed. When the news reached Caliph Abū Ja‘far al-Mansūr (d. 158/775), he personally apologized and promised to punish the governor for this act, however, Imām forgave him. Once Imām Mālik was accompanying the Caliph who asked the Imām, ‘How did you people adopt Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion amidst the sayings of so many companions?’ Imām Mālik replied, ‘O Commander of the Faithful! Ibn ‘Umar held a prestigious status amongst people as long as he lived. We have seen our elders taking his opinion; therefore, we also adopted his.’ The Caliph replied, ‘Take his opinion even if it is against ‘Alī and Ibn ‘Abbās’.⁸⁴⁴ This incident explains Ibn ‘Umar’s influence both on Imām Mālik and Caliph al-Mansūr. Most probably the caliph deemed Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion on the issue of *fitan* more pragmatic for strengthening the Abbasid caliphate.

Sufyān al-Thawrī is another prominent personality amongst followers of the successors. He was a distinguished scholar, traditionist, founder of Thawrī School of Thought (that survived for about six centuries), a jurist and famous for his unparalleled asceticism (*zuhd*).

⁸⁴² Ibid.

⁸⁴³ Ibid.

⁸⁴⁴ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, V, 466; al-Qādī ‘Iyāḍ al-Yaḥṣubī, *Tartīb al-Madārik wa Taqrīb al-Masālik bi-Ma‘rifat A‘lām Madhhab Mālik* [The Ordering of Perception and Facilitation of Procedures for Knowledge of the Most Eminent in the School of Mālik] (Morocco: Fedala Printing House, 1983), I, 132.

Sufyān's grandfather, Masrūq, was a companion of Caliph 'Alī in the battle of the Camel. He himself had remained active against the declining Umayyad caliphate but leaned towards Ibn 'Umar's stance in young age after meeting 'Abd Allāh b. 'Awn (d. 151/768) and Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī.⁸⁴⁵ An interesting aspect about Ibn 'Awn and Ayyūb that they had been taught by the students of Ibn 'Umar. Ibn 'Awn received education from Sālim and therefore he narrated *ḥadiths* from his other disciples like Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, al-Sha'bī, etc.⁸⁴⁶ Whereas Ayyūb was the most reliable student of Nāfi'.⁸⁴⁷ Sufyān used to say about the position of Ibn 'Umar in the battles of *fitan*, 'In the time of unity, we take the word of 'Umar while in the time of division we follow the word of his son, Ibn 'Umar'.⁸⁴⁸

Sufyān al-Thawrī is known as the most knowledgeable scholar of the Islamic world after the demise of Imām Abū Ḥanīfa. The Abbasid caliphs al-Manṣūr and Maḥdī (d. 169/785) tried hard to delegate him responsibilities of judiciary for his expertise. The last decade of Sufyān's life was ridden with difficulties as he had to remain in hiding and kept switching places. He died in the same state. A scholar of such caliber who the caliphs wished to appoint chief justice attach huge importance to his saying 'We follow Ibn 'Umar in *fitan*'. The statement also represents a vital and influential segment of society. This reveals that the stance of *Ahl al-Sunnah* on *fitan* got refined at the hands of these key personalities.

These are only the very well-known figures from the generations of *ṣahāba*, *tābi'ūn* and *tābi'ū al-tābi'īn*, otherwise, Ibn 'Umar's influence is far more than on this limited number of individuals. These names are mentioned for their explicit opinion about Ibn 'Umar's position. There are others who covertly worked for the promotion of his views, but history has not recorded their remarks on him, for instance, Laylā, Ibn 'Umar's niece, (his son) 'Abd Allāh, 'Irāk, Ayyūb al-Sakhtiyānī, Ibn 'Awn, etc. They were in touch with Ibn 'Umar and their role in the *fitan* was constructive too. Such personalities have another significance that they serve as a link between Ibn 'Umar and those influential figures mentioned above like Ibn 'Umar's niece Laylā works as a connection between him and her son, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz. So is the case with 'Irāk, Ayūb al-Sakhtiyānī and Ibn 'Awn.

Embracing Ibn 'Umar's stance was also a need for these people as they lived in *fitan*-like-

⁸⁴⁵ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, XI, 657.

⁸⁴⁶ Aḥmad b. 'Alī Ibn Ḥajar al-'Asqalānī, *Tahdhīb al-Tahdhīb* [Abridgement of al-Mizzī's *Tahdhīb al-Kamāl*] (Hyderabad: Maktabat Dā'irat Ma'ārif al-Nizāmiyyah, 1908), V, 347.

⁸⁴⁷ al-Mizzī, *Tahzīb al-Kamāl*, XIIX, 348.

⁸⁴⁸ Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, *al-Sunnah*, 138.

conditions and had realized that it is his only approach that survived while other approaches were struggling. That is why they followed him to avoid wars and bloodshed in their societies. The personalities discussed in subchapters (6.1.2 – 6.1.4) were dealt chronologically following their date of death. This approach, despite some advantages, does not present the big picture of Ibn ‘Umar’s impact generation after generation and consequently cannot clearly explain how his viewpoint on *fitan* taking place in Mecca and Medina (Hijaz), had spread over major cities of the Islamic world. Therefore, a table has been drawn on the next page to elaborate some new aspects of this impact on the three generations (*ṣaḥābah*, *tābi‘ūn* and *tābi‘ū al-tābi‘īn*).

	Medina / Mecca	Kufa	Basra	Yemen	Syria	Baghdad	Egypt
Şahāba	<p>Ibn Mas'ūd (d. 32/653)</p> <p>Ḥudhayfa (d. 36/656)</p> <p>Caliph 'Alī (d. 40/661)</p> <p>Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī (d. 44/664)</p> <p>'Ā'isha (d. 56/678)</p> <p>Abū Hurayra (d. 59/678)</p> <p>'Abd Allāh b. 'Amr (d. 65/684)</p> <p>Jābir b. 'Abd Allāh (d. 78/697)</p> <p>Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī (d. 74/693)</p>						<p>Ibn 'Amr</p>
Tābi'ūn	<p>Ibn Ḥanafiyya (d. 81/700)</p> <p>'Urwa (d. 94/713)</p> <p>Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib (d. 94/715)</p> <p>'Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Sajjād (d. 95/713)</p> <p>Mujāhid (d. 104/722)</p> <p>'Abd Allāh (d. 105/723), son of Ibn 'Umar</p> <p>Sālim (d. 106/728)</p> <p>Nāfi' (d. 117/726)</p> <p>'Amr b. Dīnār (d. 126/744)</p> <p>Abū al-Zinād (d. 130/748)</p>	<p>Mūsā b. Ṭalḥa (d. 103/722)</p> <p>al-Sha'abī (d. 103/723)</p>	<p>Ḥasan al-Baṣrī (d. 110/728)</p>	<p>Ṭāwūs (106/724)</p>	<p>Ibn Muḥayrīz (d. 99/718)</p> <p>Laylā bint 'Āsim (d. ??)</p> <p>'Umar II (d. 101/720)</p> <p>'Irāk (104/722)</p> <p>Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī (124/741)</p>		<p>Nāfi'</p>
Tābi'ū al-Tābi'in	<p>Imām Mālik (d. 179/795)</p>	<p>Sufyān al-Thawrī (d. 161/778)</p>	<p>Ayūb al-Sakhtiyānī (d. 131/748)</p> <p>Ibn 'Awn (d. 151/768)</p>			<p>Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr (158/775)</p>	

The above table⁸⁴⁹ tries to clarify that Ibn 'Umar's stance on *fitan* incidents spread beyond Hijaz to Basra, Kufa, Baghdad, Yemen, Syria, and Egypt. These personalities were all leaders of various regions, and it is very interesting to see that Ibn 'Umar's leadership was not limited to Medina alone but also all Muslim regions considered him a role model. In modern jargon, his influence is really global rather than local.

The table also shows that his impact was not restricted to any particular group or class of people, rather its appeal was across the board. For example, Caliph 'Alī, 'Ā'isha and 'Amr b. al-'Āṣ belonged to three different groups fighting in *fitan* and according to some traditions, all three later became convinced of Ibn 'Umar's opinion. Similarly, Ibn 'Umar's position influenced the scholars (Imām Mālik, Sufyān al-Thawrī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, etc.) as well as the caliphs (the Umayyad 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz and the Abbasid Abū Ja'far al-Manṣūr). The diversity of his influence is another evidence for Ibn 'Umar's authentic approach and welcomed understanding.

The table has only discussed personalities from the first three Muslim generations as afterwards juristic schools developed, and a consensus was reached against the rebellion amongst the Sunnite scholars (see subchapter 6.2). This gives the impression that Ibn 'Umar's policy for social transformation was bottom-up and not vice versa. The bottom-up approach means to train competent and neutral individuals so that they may exercise their influence over the elite. This upper class then initiates a top-down social change. The bottom-up approach aims to make a society healthy spiritually and socially. It was a time-consuming and tedious activity, however, Ibn 'Umar did not care whether his voice was being heard or not. He kept up his constant efforts, hard work, positive action, proaction and perseverance. It also seems as if he could see that top-down approach had not achieved the goal it desired in long term.

It gives a feeling as if Ibn 'Umar's modus operandi to work against an atrocious government was through perseverance and peaceful non-violent resistance. His distance from the race to caliphate, preserving neutrality in the crosscurrents, and abstention from monetary incentives or ranks against political support lent his personality a grace and a higher moral status in

⁸⁴⁹ There arise some difficulties as a single personality stays at various points. For instance, there are some companions who moved from Medina to other cities after the demise of Caliph 'Umar, like Ibn Mas'ūd moved to Kufa, 'Abd Allah b. 'Amr to Egypt, etc. Similarly, Ibn 'Umar's student Nāfi whose major part of life was spent in Medina but 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz appointed him at Egypt and Yemen too. In this case, such personalities are shown in the table in the city of Medina.

society. His words were consequently not taken as a scornful criticism. Thus, the ruling elite despite tribal mindset tolerated his criticism and listened to his advice with credence as opposed to their political contenders.

6.2 *Fitan* Events: Comparison of Ibn ‘Umar’s Stance with the Standpoint of *Ahl al-Sunnah*

This subchapter aims a comparative study of *fitan* wars where they stand between Ibn ‘Umar and *Ahl al-Sunnah*. As these wars happened in two waves between 34/655-73/693 sometimes with long intervals, therefore, the discussion would need a historical background. To meet this end, I will only refer to the previous chapters where the concerned events have already been discussed. Thereafter, I will critically evaluate and compare between the perspectives of Ibn ‘Umar and *Ahl al-Sunnah*.

6.2.1 *Ahl al-Sunnah* on *Fitan*

Ahl al-Sunnah wa al-Jamā‘ah literally means People of the Sunnah and the Consensus or Mainstream Muslim Community. This is the Islamic school of thought which represents majority of the Muslims, 85 to 90 % of the whole Muslim world.⁸⁵⁰ They distinguish themselves from other Islamic sects or marginal groups whose views, they maintain, constitute *bida‘* (sg. *bid‘ah* ‘innovations’), departures from what the mainstream community at large holds.”⁸⁵¹

Historically speaking there is a deep connection between the existence of *Ahl al-Sunnah* with Imāmate: the issue that after the demise of the Prophet, who may be held superior amongst the first four caliphs (Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī)? *Ahl al-Sunnah* believe that the order of their virtue is in accordance with the order they won accession. However, except for the Zaydites sect, the rest of the Shiites believe that ‘Alī alone was the rightful successor to the Prophet.⁸⁵²

The Sunnite scholars do not completely depend on historical traditions for their appraisal of the companions involved in *fitan*. Instead, they rely on the companions early Islam, their sacrifices in its way, the Prophet’s good tidings and assurance of heavens to them. Thus, if a historical tradition understates a companion, it is either interpreted in cognizance of his due

⁸⁵⁰ Denny, *Sunni Islam*, 3.

⁸⁵¹ Ibid.

⁸⁵² Muḥammad b. Ṭayyib al-Bāqilānī, *al-Inṣāf fī mā Yajib I’tiqāduh wa lā Yajūz al-Jahl bih* [Equity in What Must be Believed in and may not be Ignorant about] (Cairo: al-Maktabah al-Athariyyah li al-Turāth, 2002), 61-64.

stature or dismissed in case such an interpretation is impossible.⁸⁵³ In other words, the early and classical period scholars subjected the companions to theological and confessional reading because they were praised in the Qur'ān and they were the carriers of the prophetic heritage. This attitude has even entered among the main parameters of Islamic creed: 'to cover up the *fitan* period is better than approaches that will lead to wrong thinking about the companions'. Even if this kind of reading prevents criticism about these companions, today we may draw a more analytical and critical picture from the details in the narrations.

Ahl al-Sunnah's theological-legal reading of *fitan* has a lasting impact. First, ever there came a dispute amongst the companions, *Ahl al-Sunnah* are inclined to favor those who embraced Islam earlier, spent longer period in the Prophet's companionship and had offered greater sacrifices. Some of the famous divisions of *ṣaḥāba* based on virtues are as under: *al-‘asharah al-mubashsharah* i.e., the ten blessed companions,⁸⁵⁴ *badarī* companions who took part in Badr and following battles,⁸⁵⁵ the companions involved in Ḥudaybiya Pact and the Blessed Pledge of Allegiance,⁸⁵⁶ etc. These companions are extolled, represented as role-models in the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*, and the Prophet had proclaimed paradise for them. In a conflict between senior and junior companions, the Sunnites not only favour the seniors, but they also try to lighten responsibility of the juniors' mistakes by such interpretations that are worthy of the dignified stature of *companionship*. Therefore, most of the historical literature on *fitan* turns unauthentic in their view wherein truth and falsehood have inextricably got mixed.⁸⁵⁷ If on one hand historical literature counteracts virtuous description of senior companions by the Qur'ān and *ḥadīth*,⁸⁵⁸ on the other it challenges Muslims' belief in the miraculous nature of the Qur'ān. How a book revealed by God for all humanity for all ages, could laud the companions with such qualities which goes against their lives.

Portrayal of the companions in historical sources poses another problem. According to the rules

⁸⁵³ Muḥammad b. ‘Abd Allah al-Zarkashī, *Tashnīf al-Masāmi‘ bi Jam‘ al-Jawāmi‘ li al-Subkī* [Delighting the Ears with al-Subkī's Book: *Jam‘ al-Jawāmi‘*] (Cairo: Maktabat Qurṭuba li al-Baḥth al-‘Ilmī, 1998), IV, 841-44.

⁸⁵⁴ Abū Bakr, ‘Umar, ‘Uthmān, ‘Alī, Ṭalḥā, al-Zubayr, ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Awf, Sa‘d b. Abī Waqqāṣ, Sa‘īd b. Zayd, Abū ‘Ubayda b. al Jarrāḥ.

⁸⁵⁵ al-Qur'ān, 3: 123-25; 9: 7-9, 12, 41; *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3007, 3081, 3983; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 1763, 2494.

⁸⁵⁶ al-Qur'ān, 48: 10-18; 57: 10; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2496; Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 27362.

⁸⁵⁷ al-Zarkashī, *Tashnīf al-Masāmi‘*, IV, 842

⁸⁵⁸ ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn* [Principles of the Faith] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 2002), 314-15.

for *ḥadīth* narration, such a sinful person loses integrity and cannot be accepted as narrator / source person. Consequently, these companions cannot maintain their reliability as an authoritative source for the knowledge that we have received through them, e.g., the Qur'ān, *ḥadīth*, *fiqh*, *sīrah* and early Islamic history. *Ahl al-Sunnah* do not deem the companions as innocent of error, but they hold that the nature of their mistakes does not affect their uprightness (*'adālah*).⁸⁵⁹ By uprightness they mean that they never lied about the Prophet or in matters of religion (*dīn*); therefore, the knowledge they conveyed, goes unaffected.

Besides, there prevails a strong opposition amongst the Sunnite scholars for any (political) change that comes out of bloody revolution. In this regard, they even oppose a caliphate established with the consent of the majority but as a result of bloodshed whose disadvantages outnumber its advantages. However, they tend to compromise on the sub-standard rule as per the maxim of necessity but for the sake of a peaceful state where a person may live his religious and social life in a dignified way. It is also in keeping with this maxim of expediency that the Sunnite scholars have accepted Mu'āwiya, Yazīd, and other Umayyad (or Abbasid) rulers but never venerated them with sanctity as they treated the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

6.2.2 'Uthmān's Assassination⁸⁶⁰

Based on *Ahl al-Sunnah's* policy on the Rashidun Caliphs (discussed in 6.2.1), it may be construed that since 'Uthmān was the senior most amongst the companions and the Prophet's prophecies were in place, hence, his assassination was an act of cruelty; his supporters were right, and opponents were wrong. They do not indulge into the discussion as to what extent 'Uthmān's politics may be held responsible for creating such circumstances or whether he had violated his oath of office (by opposing the settled practices of the earlier two caliphs).

This viewpoint of *Ahl al-Sunnah* was a process that devolved quite later; however, it was an essential part of Ibn 'Umar's life. It may be elucidated by hinting at the following incident:

In 'Uthmān's caliphate, a person came to me and started talking about him. During the conversation, he said to me that I should also condemn and criticize the caliph ... When he finished talking, I (instead of disparaging 'Uthmān) told him, 'In the

⁸⁵⁹ 'Alī b. Sulaymān al-Mardāwī, *al-Taḥbīr Sharḥ al-Taḥrīr fī 'Uṣūl al-Fiqh* [Commentary of the Book *al-Taḥrīr* on Principles of Islamic jurisprudence] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Rushd, 2000), IV, 1994.

⁸⁶⁰ For the historical background of 'Uthmān's politics and his martyrdom, please refer to sub-chapter 3.1.

lifetime of the Prophet, we used to say that after the Prophet, Abū Bakr, then ‘Umar and then ‘Uthmān are exalted amongst the *ummah*’.⁸⁶¹

This incident reveals how intently Ibn ‘Umar viewed all the incidents that took place during the reign of the third caliph – not just through the happenings but through the life which ‘Uthmān had spent with the Prophet. He followed the same policy with ‘Alī (it shall come in subchapter 6.2.3). This was a very important approach because Ibn ‘Umar's socio-theological reading of ‘Uthmān's life later determined the way *Ahl al-Sunnah*'s evaluation of the life of all the companions. Ibn ‘Umar, knowing past and present of the companions, evaluates the companions wholistically. His knowledge of past to the present of the companions empowers his judgement.

The Sunnite scholars do not only ascribe ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom to brutality but also deem the assassins and their supporters as impious (*fāsiq*). Furthermore, they divide ‘Uthmān’s supporters into two groups: First, those who remained by his side till his last moment but were barred from fighting due to the caliph’s orders; Secondly, those who did not come out to guard him because of his express command. *Ahl al-Sunnah* deems the first group more esteemed to which Ibn ‘Umar belonged (see subchapter 3.1.4).⁸⁶² On the same grounds, the mainstream scholars unanimously forbid rebellion against a just and a pious ruler as has already been discussed about the conduct of Ibn ‘Umar throughout *fitan*.

The protesters’ plea against ‘Uthmān was that he could not fulfil the responsibilities for his senior age (see subchapter 3.1.4).⁸⁶³ However, *Ahl al-Sunnah* have not debated the issue whether he was in such a state and not able to undertake his responsibilities. In this regard, they often mention a *ḥadīth* wherein ‘Uthmān was forbidden by the Prophet to resign.⁸⁶⁴ Since this topic has close resemblance with Imām Ḥasan’s voluntary abdication, therefore it will be discussed in section 6.2.3 as a comparative study.

⁸⁶¹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 64; al-Khallāl, *al-Sunnah*, no. 546.

⁸⁶² al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 314; Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-‘Awāṣim*, 132-34; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, III, 444-47, 452-53.

⁸⁶³ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 373-75; al-Suyūṭī, *Tārīkh al-Khulafā’*, 123-24.

⁸⁶⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 24466; ‘Umar b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Mukhtaṣar Istidrāk al-Ḥāfiẓ al-Dhahabī ‘alā Mustadrak Abī ‘Abd Allāh al-Ḥākim* [Abridgment of Ḍahabī’s Rectification of al-Ḥākim’s Book *al-Mustadrak*] (Riyadh: Dār al-‘Āṣimah, 1990), III, 1266; al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu‘jam al-Awsaṭ*, IV, 115.

6.2.3 The battles fought during the reign of Caliph ‘Alī

‘Alī faced two major challenges: first, to punish ‘Uthmān’s assassins and second, to revive the influence of senior companions in line with ‘Umar’s devised strategy (see section 3.2.1).⁸⁶⁵ Consequently, the battle of the Camel took place due to the first problem and the battle of Şiffin because of the second one. Both the issues and the ensuing battles have had a deep impact on Islamic theology.

Ahl al-Sunnah (on the grounds mentioned in 6.2.1 and 6.2.2) hold that ‘Alī was right in all his battles for being the senior most companion at that time, a key member of the council, the fourth righteous caliph and for other merits.⁸⁶⁶ Similarly, his adversaries were wrong.⁸⁶⁷ However, some opine that had ‘Alī opted for a milder approach, he could have avoided these battles and reach some mutual agreement.⁸⁶⁸ The contextual reference of this opinion is not available in the books of theology, but some historical records mention an agreement between ‘Alī and Mu‘āwiya that the latter would retain Syria.⁸⁶⁹ The fruits of this agreement could not show up because of ‘Alī’s sudden martyrdom. ‘Alī had the prerogative to remove or fight a rebel governor, yet, had the patch up been made before the battle, it would have been much better. Here it is not out of place to state that if Ibn ‘Umar’s suggestion ‘to assemble the people of Medina for consultation’ was heard, in that case a gentle modality could have been figured out (see subchapter 3.2.2).

There is a disagreement among *Ahl al-Sunnah* over the type of error made by the opponents of ‘Alī. Some deem them as *fāsiq* (one who intentionally and constantly transgresses the clearly prescribed boundaries of God).⁸⁷⁰ This opinion, however, did not win a general approval. Some scholars exempt a few (al-Zubayr b. al-‘Awwām, Ṭalḥa b. ‘Ubayd Allāh and ‘Ā’isha) from this general rule because these three personalities went for reconciliation, had realized their mistake before the war broke out and had decided to return. ‘Ā’isha could not journey alone whereas

⁸⁶⁵ Fu‘ād Jabalī, “Companions of the Prophet”, 243-244.

⁸⁶⁶ al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 315; ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. Aḥmad al-‘Ījī, *al-Mawāqif* [The Perspectives] (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1997), III, 595-621; ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn wa Ikhtilāf al-Muṣallīn* [Theological Opinions of the Muslims] (Beirut: al-Maktabah al-‘Aṣriyyah, 2005), I, 22.

⁸⁶⁷ al-Zarkashī, *Tashnīf al-Masāmi‘*, IV, 841-44; al-Bāqilānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 64

⁸⁶⁸ al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 316.

⁸⁶⁹ al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, V, 133-140; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, IV, 218-251.

⁸⁷⁰ al-‘Ījī, *al-Mawāqif*, III, 644; ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif* [Commentary of the Book *al-Mawāqif*] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, n.d.), VIII, 407.

the other two were killed by the combatants.⁸⁷¹

Certainly, singling out the three companions is an outcome of theological-legal reading of *Ahl al-Sunnah*. Since al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa and ‘Ā’isha had the virtues mentioned in subchapter 6.2.1 and happy tidings were proclaimed in their favour by the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth*, hence, such a scholarly interpretation was essential that may not clash with the religious texts.

This exemption makes the ruling of *fisq* very severe for those who participated in the war following the footsteps of these three. Maybe keeping this in view, majority of scholars suggested to further ease off the approach. They said that those who oppose ‘Alī, though wrong, but reached this decision after due deliberation (*ijtihād* / reasoning). Therefore, they shall get a single reward as per a saying of the Prophet ‘if a person carries out due deliberation, and reaches a wrong decision, still he shall be entitled to a single reward and if he reaches a right decision after due thinking process, then he shall get two rewards.’⁸⁷² If they have acted contrarily, they would not receive any.⁸⁷³ Almost all the Sunnite scholars generally hold this opinion with slight difference of words.⁸⁷⁴

Ahl al-Sunnah adopt a similar position on the battle of Ṣiffīn and the subsequent arbitration that ‘Alī’ was correct while his opponent Mu‘āwiya was erroneous. They, likewise, differ on figuring out this error. Some hold him a *fāsiq*⁸⁷⁵ and others take him to be a rebel in the light of the tradition reported from the Prophet⁸⁷⁶ but this rebellion did not reach to the level of *kufr* (disbelief).⁸⁷⁷ Some other deem it a mistake but do not count it *fisq*. The opinion which has won general opinion is that his erred judgment was same as that of ‘Ā’isha, Ṭalḥa and that of al-Zubayr.⁸⁷⁸

These were the events of the first wave of *fitan* (34/655 – 41/662) when companions more

⁸⁷¹ al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 313; al-Bāqilānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 63.

⁸⁷² al-Bāqilānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 64.

⁸⁷³ ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-‘Āmidī, *Abkār al-Afkār fī Uṣūl al-Dīn* [The Original Ideas in the Principles of Faith] (Cairo: Dār al-Kutub wa al-Wathā’iq al-Qawmiyyah, 2004), 295.

⁸⁷⁴ ‘Abd al-Qāhir al-Baghdādī, *al-Farq bayn al-Firaq* [Characteristics of Muslim Sects] (Beirut: Dār al-‘Āfāq al-Jadīdah, 1977), 99-102.

⁸⁷⁵ al-‘Ījī, *al-Mawāqif*, III, 644; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, VIII, 407.

⁸⁷⁶ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 447; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2916.

⁸⁷⁷ al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 315.

⁸⁷⁸ al-Bāqilānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 64; al-‘Ījī, *al-Mawāqif*, III, 644; al-Jurjānī, *Sharḥ al-Mawāqif*, 406-07; ‘Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā* [Advisory Opinions on Matters of Islamic Law] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1987), III, 444.

senior to Ibn ‘Umar were present; still, his influence is visible. For example, the interpretation he gave to the conflict of the protestors with Caliph ‘Uthmān had a far-reaching impact on *Ahl al-Sunnah* that led to the consolidation of the *ummah*. Shortly before ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom, Ibn ‘Umar held opponents’ protest a difference over the worldly matter (see subchapter 3.1.4).⁸⁷⁹ In other words it was a petty political and economic difference that had nothing to do with the fundamental principles of religion to become a sensitive issue.

Amongst *Ahl al-Sunnah*, there are scholars who view that *fitan* wars had nothing to do with the fundamental principles of religion.⁸⁸⁰ As a result, the temporary split among *Ahl al-Sunnah* factions remained political in nature, and both the groupings stayed within the mainstream Muslim community. It was therefore the viewpoint of Ibn ‘Umar and his like-minded companions that brought about a uniting interpretation of *fitan* wars that this clash was not based on the fundamental rules of religion (the caliphate of ‘Alī) but on a subsidiary issue whether ‘the vengeance of ‘Uthmān should be taken first or the allegiance of ‘Alī’.

There are other examples of Ibn ‘Umar’s soft voice in the noise of *fitan*. As mentioned in subchapter 6.1.1 that only a small minority of the companions participated in these wars. Majority of them were favourable to the stance of ‘Alī but were in dire confusion how could they shed blood of those Muslims whom they had worked with to strengthen Islam. This group was led by senior converts of the Quraysh and none of them took part in *Ṣiffīn*.⁸⁸¹ Their viewpoint was based on the Qur’ān and on those sayings of the Prophet that dealt with the advised conduct during the times of *fitan*.⁸⁸² Prior to the battle of the Camel, Ibn ‘Umar’s advice to ‘Alī to call a meeting of the people of Medina was probably, a recommendation to gather this group around him. However, it could not be put into practice owing to the battle of the Camel and the relocation of capital city from Medina to Kufa. The outcome of the battles further strengthened the viewpoint of this group (see subchapters 3.2.2 and 3.2.3). It is the same group that had shaped and refined the stance of the mainstream Sunnite scholars.

⁸⁷⁹ Abū Bakr al-Khallāl, *al-Sunnah*, No. 546; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 64.

⁸⁸⁰ Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah*, VI, 328; Yousuf al-Nabhānī, *al-Asālib al-Badī’ah fī Faḍl al-Ṣaḥābah wa Iqnā’ al-Shī’ah* [The Creative Methods adopted in the statement of the Excellence of the Companions and Convincing the Shiites] (Egypt: al-Maṭba’ah al-Maymaniyyah, n.d.), 74; Muḥammad al-Wuhaybī, “I’tiqād Ahl al-Sunnah fī al-Ṣaḥābah [The Belief of the Sunnis in the Companions]”, *FaisalNoor*, <https://www.fnoor.com/main/articles.aspx?article_no=9022#_ftn112>.

⁸⁸¹ Ibid, 243-244.

⁸⁸² al-Dānī, *al-Sunan al-Wāridah fī al-Fitan*.

Another distinct feature of this group was that they did not try to ascertain who held the wrong stance amongst the participants in *fitan* battles. They discussed virtues of both and overlooked their slips. It is Ibn ‘Umar who initiated this trend (as discussed in the subchapter 6.1.1). We may see when people got divided into the supporters of ‘Alī and ‘Uthmān and tried to find flaws in the opponent group leader (‘Uthmān / ‘Alī), Ibn ‘Umar praised and defended both by saying, ‘As for ‘Uthmān, it seems God has forgiven him, but you people dislike that he should be forgiven. And as for ‘Alī, he is the cousin of the Prophet and his son-in-law.’ Then he pointed with his hand and said, ‘That is his house which you see.’⁸⁸³ The same course of action is adopted by *Ahl al-Sunnah*. Almost all major sources keep silence over such issues and avert interpretations that may to any objection against their conduct.⁸⁸⁴ Although, they are reluctant to talk about it in theological treaties, they do not miss a single detail in history and other sources. In other words, they did not hide any information but prefer not to talk theologically for the fear of saying something wrong about the companions.

Ahl al-Sunnah hold a different opinion about Kharijites in the battle of Nahrawān. Majority of their scholars, jurists, theologians unanimously agree to declare the Kharijites as misguided and innovators.⁸⁸⁵ Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on ‘Alī’s battle against the Kharijites is the same that *Ahl al-Sunnah* hold. He was in Medina when the battle took place far away without prior planning, therefore, could not join. However, he regretted all his life for not having fought against the Kharijites alongside ‘Alī. Contrary to the earlier battles, Kharijites looked to Ibn ‘Umar a theological problem. His stance must have been strengthened by the prophetic traditions and also by the lack of companions on their side.

Later developments proved that *ṣaḥāba*’s stance was right as Kharijites turned out to be an extremist group. The Kharijites deemed those who committed grave sins as disbelievers and

⁸⁸³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 4514, URL: <https://sunnah.com/bukhari/65/40>

⁸⁸⁴ ‘Alī b. Ismā‘īl al-Ash‘arī, *al-‘Ibānah ‘an Uṣūl al-Diyānah* [The Elucidation of Islamic Foundations] (Cairo: Dār al-Anṣār, 1938), I, 29; al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, I, 228; Aḥmad b. Ḥasan al-Baghdādī, “al-‘I‘tiqād al-Qādirī”, *Journal of Umm al-Qura University for Language Sciences and Literature*, Vol. 18, Issue: 39, 2006; Ibn ‘Arabī, *al-‘Awāsim*, 171; ‘Aḥmad ibn ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Minhāj al-Sunnah al-Nabawīyah* [The Way of the Prophetic Legacy], (Riyadh: Imam Muhammad Ibn Saud Islamic University, 1986), IV, 311; Muhammad b. Aḥmad al-Dhahabī, *al-Muntaqā min Minhāj al-‘I‘tidāl* [Methodology of Moderation in the Criticism of the Rafidites and Mu‘tazilites], 220; Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūfī, *Ḥaqīqat al-Bid‘ah wa al-Sunnah* [The Reality of Innovation and Prophetic Legacy] (Riyadh: Maṭābi‘ al-Rashīd, 1989), 209; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Wahhāb al-Najdī, *Uṣūl al-‘Īmān* [Principles of Faith] (Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 1990), 14.

⁸⁸⁵ Ibn Taymiyyah, *al-Fatāwā al-Kubrā*, III, 444.

worthy of capital punishment. They also considered those people disbelievers who disagreed with them. They carried out a series of attacks on the centres of Muslims and illegally collected tax that was meant to be given to the government. Therefore, all among the companions and later *Ahl al-Sunnah* unanimously regarded them as religious extremists who have departed the Muslim community.⁸⁸⁶

6.2.4 Abdication of Imām Ḥasan

Abdication of Imām Ḥasan is viewed with utmost respect amongst all the Sunnite scholars for the benefits it brought and for being in accordance with the prophecy made by the Prophet.⁸⁸⁷ The incident also provides the Sunnites with a principle to frame laws upon that a caliph may withdraw from caliphate in order to restore peace and tranquility in society.⁸⁸⁸ However, this topic may become more interesting when it is compared with the demand of the demonstrators from ‘Uthmān to step down. The subject is also significant regarding Ibn ‘Umar because as per some sources, he forbade him from abdication (see chapter 3.1.4).⁸⁸⁹ Therefore, this advice to ‘Uthmān has been discussed in some books under the title of ‘Ibn ‘Umar’s Judgments’⁸⁹⁰. Similarly, Ibn ‘Umar was present at the time of reconciliation between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya (see subchapter 3.3.2).

The comparison is also important as both incidents guide in opposite directions: traditions about Imām Ḥasan encourage to abdicate and those about ‘Uthmān advise otherwise. Both issues have been examined by the Sunnites such that Imām Ḥasan was instructed to retire from caliphate for peace and well-being of the *ummah*⁸⁹¹ whereas ‘Uthmān was advised not to succumb to the pressure of a minority group so that it may not become a precedent for future practice.⁸⁹²

⁸⁸⁶ *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaytiyyah* [Kuwaiti Encyclopedia of Islamic Jurisprudence], vol. 8 (Kuwait: Ministry of Awqāf and Islamic Affairs, 1986), 130-31; Tamara Sonn and Adam Farrar, "Kharijites". In *obo* in *Islamic Studies*, <https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780195390155/obo-9780195390155-0047.xml> (accessed 24 Mar. 2022).

⁸⁸⁷ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2704, 3629, 3746; Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 4662; al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 3773; al-Naṣā’ī, *al-Sunan*, no. 1410.

⁸⁸⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, XIII, 65.

⁸⁸⁹ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 37656.

⁸⁹⁰ Ibn al-‘Arabī, *al-‘Awāṣim*, 130.

⁸⁹¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2704, 3629, 3746; Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 4662; al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 3773; al-Naṣā’ī, *al-Sunan*, no. 1410.

⁸⁹² Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 57.

There are other aspects that we should consider. For example, if taken from authenticity point of view, the traditions about Imām Ḥasan are sound and hence more authoritative. If the words are analyzed, it only bears a prophecy about Imām Ḥasan that, ‘This son of mine is a *sayyid* (leader) and may God make peace between two big groups of Muslims through him’.⁸⁹³ ‘Uthmān was contrarily forbidden to abdicate in the traditions related to him (its detail shall come later). History verifies that the battles of the Camel and Ṣiffīn revolve around the nature of revenge of ‘Uthmān’s assassination. These battles put an end to the Rashidun caliphate and gave birth to monarchy. The clash also led to sectarianism and the *ummah* got divided between the lovers of ‘Alī and lovers of ‘Uthmān. Here an objection against the Prophet’s counsel may arise in minds i.e., how could the Prophet himself give an advice that could lead to the downfall of the *ummah* and may put an end to a political system that followed his ways. It is therefore important to review the authenticity of these traditions.

The sayings of the Prophet about ‘Uthmān are not very sound in terms of authenticity and their chains of transmissions have been debated by *ḥadīth* experts.⁸⁹⁴ The tradition has been reported by three companions: ‘Ā’isha, ‘Uthmān and ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar. An authenticity cum semantic analysis has been given below:

On the authority of ‘Ā’isha, the tradition has been reported by three transmitters (‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, Abū Sahla and Nu‘mān b. al-Bashīr). The narrator Faraj b. Fadāla (d. 176/792) is weak in ‘Urwa’s chain of transmission and, therefore, Imām al-Dhahabī (d. 748/1348) has described it weak in authenticity.⁸⁹⁵ The narration of Abū Sahla is weak too due to Abū Sahla himself and a saying of Imām al-Bazzār about him shall be quoted in the pages to come. Lastly, al-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr’s narration seems apparently authentic and consequently the *ḥadīth* about ‘Uthmān is considered reliable, but the semantic clashes (discussed later) and its veracity (of chain of transmission) pose a big problem. The popular *ḥadīth* book *Musnad Aḥmad* reports 2403 sayings on authority of ‘Ā’isha,⁸⁹⁶ amongst them only two traditions have been ascribed to al-

⁸⁹³ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 2704, 3629, 3746; Abū Dāwūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 4662; al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no. 3773; al-Naṣā’ī, *al-Sunan*, no. 1410.

⁸⁹⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 24466, see the footnote on this *ḥadīth*. Similarly, chain of this *ḥadīth* has been criticized by al-Dhahabī. See: Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Mukhtaṣar Istidrāk al-Ḥāfiẓ*, III, 1266; see also: al-Ṭabarānī, *al-Mu’jam al-Awsaṭ*, IV, 115.

⁸⁹⁵ Ibn al-Mulaqqin, *Mukhtaṣar Istidrāk al-Ḥāfiẓ*, III, 1266.

⁸⁹⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 24010 – 26412.

Nu‘mān b. Bashīr and both are about the topic under discussion about ‘Uthmān.⁸⁹⁷ Except these two sayings, al-Nu‘mān b. Bashīr has not reported any other tradition on ‘Ā’isha’s authority which in itself is a question mark.

‘Uthmān is the second companion who has reported this *ḥadīth* from the Prophet. However, his report does not contain any instruction for non-abdication from the caliphate in case of public demand. ‘Uthmān has only reported that ‘The Messenger of God has pledged me on which I shall exercise patience’.⁸⁹⁸ This tradition on authority of ‘Uthmān has been reported by his freed slave Abū Sahla and from him by Qays b. Abī Hāzim (d. circa 90/709). Though Imām al-Tirmidhī has held this narration as authentic (*ḥasan ṣaḥīḥ*)⁸⁹⁹ but Imām al-Bazzār has commented so in his *Musnad*, ‘We have no idea whether Abū Sahla has reported any other *ḥadīth* except this. He added, ‘this saying has not been narrated by anyone else except Qays b. Abī Hāzim from Abū Sahla’.⁹⁰⁰

Ibn ‘Umar is the third companion to report this *ḥadīth*, however, there is no mention of any instructions from the Prophet. Surprisingly, the words of *ḥadīth* narrated by ‘Ā’isha are here attributed to Ibn ‘Umar as his advice to ‘Uthmān.⁹⁰¹ Similarly, Nāfi‘ has reported this *ḥadīth* from Ibn ‘Umar. Again, out of hundreds of Nāfi‘’s students, only Ya‘lā b. Ḥakīm (d.?) has reported it.⁹⁰²

This *ḥadīth* also create semantic problems. For instance, ‘Ā’isha was away in *hajj* at the time of ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom. Many references cite her say that the Prophet had prohibited ‘Uthmān from abdication. But each narration has some contradiction. In one place, ‘Ā’isha is quoted to have said, ‘When ‘Uthmān was besieged, thereupon we said to him: O Amīr al-Mu‘minīn (leader of the faithful)! Why don’t you fight? ...’⁹⁰³ In fact, she was not present there at all. On another place, it is reported that ‘(O ‘Uthmān!) when my *ummah* decide to remove you from the caliphate, then you should not withdraw’.⁹⁰⁴ These words clash with the clear teachings of Islam

⁸⁹⁷ Ibid, no. 24566, 25162.

⁸⁹⁸ al-Tirmidhī, *al-Sunan*, no.3711.

⁸⁹⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰⁰ al-Bazzār, *al-Musnad*, no. 402.

⁹⁰¹ Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 37656; Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 767.

⁹⁰² Ibid.

⁹⁰³ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 804.

⁹⁰⁴ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 28837.

as any suitable person may be throned or dethroned by the *ummah* or its *shūrā* (council).⁹⁰⁵ It is also reported in the same tradition that ‘Ā’isha said, ‘When I saw ‘Uthmān had acceded to everything except for his withdrawal from the caliphate, then I understood it is because of the covenant made by him with the Prophet’.⁹⁰⁶ This is also not plausible as ‘Ā’isha was not present when negotiations between ‘Uthmān and the protesters took place. Some other narrations mention ‘Ā’isha forgetting it. She is reported to have said in one place ‘I can only remember this out of what the Prophet had said that ...’.⁹⁰⁷ On another place, she was asked, ‘Why didn’t you mention this *ḥadīth* when people came to you and discussed the dispute’ whereupon ‘Ā’isha replied that it had slipped out of her mind ...’.⁹⁰⁸ Likewise there is a mention of ‘Ā’isha forgetting about it in many other ways.⁹⁰⁹

It seems that later narrators noticed these contradictions and efforts were made to correct them. As for instance this statement, ‘When my *ummah* decides to depose you...’⁹¹⁰ was replaced with ‘when the hypocrites wish to remove you’.⁹¹¹ More words have been added as at one place, ‘Under no condition should you take off that robe (of the caliphate) before twelve and a half years that Allāh has bestowed upon you ...’.⁹¹² On another place, the addition of these words ‘If you took it off (i.e. abdicated caliphate), then you shall not smell a whiff of paradise’.⁹¹³

The question arises as to how come these narrations became popular without authentication and a fair scrutiny. It might be because there were traditions with better authenticity wherein the Prophet prophesied the tragic end of ‘Uthmān in these words, ‘Give (‘Uthmān) the tidings of Paradise with a calamity that will befall him’.⁹¹⁴

⁹⁰⁵ *al-Mawsū‘ah al-Fiqhiyyah al-Kuwaytiyyah*, VI, 227-229.

⁹⁰⁶ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 28837.

⁹⁰⁷ al-Ḥumaydī, *al-Musnad*, no. 270.

⁹⁰⁸ Aḥmad b. ‘Amr Ibn Abī ‘Āṣim, *al-Sunnah* [The Sunnah] (Beirut: al-Maktab al-Islāmī, 1980), no. 1778.

⁹⁰⁹ Ibn Ḥanbal, *Faḍā’il al-Ṣaḥābah*, no. 816; Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, no. 112; Ibn Abī Shaybah, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 32045, 37655.

⁹¹⁰ Ibn Ḥanbal, *al-Musnad*, no. 28837.

⁹¹¹ Ibn Mājah, *al-Sunan*, no. 112.

⁹¹² ‘Alī b. Abī Bakr al-Haythamī, *al-Maqṣid al-‘Alī fī Zawā’id Abī Ya‘lā al-Mūṣalī* [Secondary Ḥadīth Collection of al-Haythamī] (Bairut: Dār al-Kutub ‘Ilmiyyah, nd), no. 1310.

⁹¹³ Muḥammam b. Aḥmad ibn Sam‘ūn, *Amālī Ibn Sam‘ūn al-Wā‘iz* [Dictations of Ibn Sam‘ūn] (Beirut: Dār al-Bashā’ir, 2002), no. 12.

⁹¹⁴ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 3674, 3693, 6212; *Ṣaḥīḥ Muslim*, no. 2403.

Later both weak and sound narrations were taken as one and not much attention was paid that an attribution of this advice to the Prophet could lead to an objection on his prophethood as: How could the Prophet suggest such a thing that he was not aware of its consequences?! On the other hand, the more authentic narrations quoted in the collections of al-Bukhārī and Muslim mention the glad tidings but do not record any such suggestion by the Prophet. Consequently, they do not lead to any such difficulty. It is worth mentioning that not only their standard of authenticity remains at par with the tradition about Imām Ḥasan but also their style is perfectly conformable too.

Ibn ‘Umar’s influence is pivotal in this discussion because these prophetic traditions are also attributed to Ibn ‘Umar as his advice to ‘Uthmān. It is the same position that the mainstream scholars have taken up later.

6.2.5 The Reign of Yazīd

Prior to Yazīd’s ascension, Ibn ‘Umar viewed that it would lead to a rift and chaos in the *ummah*. He clearly put the matter before Mu‘āwiyah (see subchapter 4.1.3), but he thought otherwise. *Ahl al-Sunnah*’s stance on Mu‘āwiyah’s decision completely conforms to the opinion of Ibn ‘Umar’s and other *ṣaḥābah* who met with Mu‘āwiyah to convince him. Although, Mu‘āwiyah took this decision in all earnest, but it bore adverse consequences and proved to be wrong.⁹¹⁵

After Yazīd’s accession, he could not be disposed peacefully. Because peace and stability were a greater priority for Ibn ‘Umar, he took a different path that left a lasting impact. It has been discussed in subchapter 4.2 how he stopped people from participation in these wars. One important figure was Imām Ḥusayn who he advised that the Prophet was given an option (by God) to choose between this world and hereafter. The Prophet chose the hereafter. Thus, as part of the Prophet, it is virtually impossible for Imām to win the worldly rule. On the contrary, he should strive in the spiritual arena. Ibn ‘Umar was the first person who had elucidated upon this attribute of *ahl bayt* (the household of the Prophet) with such lucidity (see subchapter 4.2.2).

The lesson of history in favour of *ahl bayt* bears no variance with the words expounded by Ibn

⁹¹⁵ “*Mawqif ‘Ulamā’ al-Ummah min Mu‘āwiyah fī Tawliyatih al-Khilāfah li Yazīd* [The Sunnite’s position on Mu‘āwiyah in Appointing his Son Yazīd the Caliph]”, Islamweb, accessed: 24/03/2022, <<https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/34898/موقف-علماء-الامة-من-معاوية-في-توليته-الخليفة-ليزيد>>

‘Umar. Imām al-Ash‘arī in his book *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn* mentions twenty-five such towering personalities from the household of the Prophet who made a revolt but despite precious sacrifices, they could not win caliphate.⁹¹⁶ Different scholars have put this perceptive approach regarding the household of the Prophet in different terms. For example, Nūrsī maintains ‘Hasan and Ḥusayn, their family and descendants were destined to hold spiritual rule. It is extremely difficult to bring together worldly rule and spiritual rule. Therefore, the divine determination made them feel disgusted at the world; it showed them its ugly face so that they should cease to feel any attachment to it in their hearts.’⁹¹⁷ Nevertheless, it is safe to assume that there is a strong link between the socio-theological evaluation of Ibn ‘Umar of the status of *ahl al-bayt* and Nūrsī’s socio-spiritual dealing with them.

Second, when many provinces swore allegiance to Yazīd, pressure increased on Ibn ‘Umar from the government to take oath and from his opponents not to do that. In such conditions, Ibn ‘Umar addressed the people of Medina and intimidated them of the serious consequences of rebellion. Later the same happened in Medina and Mecca that was foretold by Ibn ‘Umar beforehand (see subchapter 4.2.3).⁹¹⁸

Most probably, the viewpoint of *Ahl al-Sunnah* evolved such that if a superior person rebels after the majority has taken allegiance to a less able person, then, people must not support the rebel.⁹¹⁹ Because, it will result in unrest, massacre, insecurity, and instability the way it took place with the people of Medina in the era of Yazīd.

The opinion of the Sunnite scholars is divided on the personality of Yazīd. Some deem him as a disbeliever and curse him whereas the other faction approves of his few strong aspects (like some of his successes) and hold that Yazīd had not given orders to martyr Imām Ḥusayn.⁹²⁰ However, a third group holds a moderate viewpoint. Neither do they deem him as a disbeliever,

⁹¹⁶ al-Ash‘arī, *Maqālāt al-Islāmiyyīn*, 76-83.

⁹¹⁷ Nursi, *Maktūbāt*, 78-79.

⁹¹⁸ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VIII, 242.

⁹¹⁹ al-Bāqilānī, *al-Inṣāf*, 64.

⁹²⁰ ‘Abd al-Raḥmān b. ‘Alī Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Radd ‘alā al-Muta‘aṣṣib al-‘Anīd al-Māni‘ min Thamm Yazīd* [Refutation of the Stubborn Biased Who prohibits from Dispraising Yazīd] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1998); Sulaymān b. Ibrāhīm al-Qunduzī, *Yanābī‘ al-Mawaddah li dhawī al-Qurbā* [Springs of Love for the Prophet’s Household] (Iran: Dar al-‘Uswah, 1995); Muḥammad b. ‘Alī al-Shawkānī, *Nayl al-‘Awṭār Sharḥ Muntaqā al-Akḥbār* [A Commentary of the Book *Muntaqā al-Akḥbār*] (Egypt: Dār al-Ḥadīth, 1993), VII, 208; al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, VII, 6; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt al-A‘yān*, III, 287; Maḥmūd b. ‘Abd Allah al-Alūsī, *Rūḥ al-Ma‘ānī* [Spirit of the Meanings] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994), XIII, 228.

nor curse or abuse him nor do they praise him. This third group does not show any leniency towards Yazīd. On the contrary, it saves itself from putting faith at stake as the Prophet has delivered strict premonition for cursing and holding a Muslim a disbeliever.⁹²¹ If a person is labeled a disbeliever wrongfully, then this label reverts to the one who has said so.⁹²² It is this moderate viewpoint that has been adopted by the mainstream scholars of *Ahl al-Sunnah*.⁹²³ If we refer to Ibn ‘Umar’s address (as given in subchapter 4.2.3), it becomes evident that he shared the same moderate opinion too. More correctly, he was the originator of this view by his attitude.

6.2.6 The Reign of the Umayyads

Ibn ‘Umar further elaborated his view of the worldly nature of the conflict over the caliphate (see subchapter 6.2.2) during the battles between Ibn al-Zubayr and ‘Abd al-Malik. He described these battles as political wars fought to gain rule and power (see subchapter 5.2.3.2).

Some of Ibn ‘Umar’s views that influenced *Ahl al-Sunnah*’s are the following: First is his decline to become a caliph without public consent despite three offers from one of the two warring groups. The same is the standard Islamic procedure and the position of *Ahl al-Sunnah*. Second is his refusal to take allegiance in presence of two groups fighting for the caliphate till one had a conclusive victory. Third, if a less qualified person could be removed from caliphate without bloodshed, it was okay, otherwise, rebellion against him was not permissible. Ibn ‘Umar said these words while standing near the crucified corpse of Ibn al-Zubayr to the effect that though Ibn al-Zubayr was better qualified to become a caliph, but he lacked in means and skills to defeat the Umayyad dynasty (see subchapter 5.2.3.8). The same is the viewpoint of the majority of Sunnite scholars.⁹²⁴

⁹²¹ *Ṣaḥīḥ al-Bukhārī*, no. 48, 6047, 7076.

⁹²² Ibid, no. 6045; Abū Dawūd, *al-Sunan*, 4908, 4950.

⁹²³ ‘Uthmān b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān Ibn al-Ṣalāḥ, *al-Fatāwā* [Advisory Opinions] (Beirut: Maktabat al-‘Ulūm wa al-Ḥikam, 1987); Aḥmad b. ‘Abd al-Ḥalīm Ibn Taymiyyah, *Majmū‘ al-Fatāwā* [Collection of Advisory Opinions] (Medina: King Fahd Complex, 1995), IV, 481-83; Ibrāhīm b. Mūsā al-Shāṭibī, *al-‘Iṭīṣām* [The Adherence to the Prophetic Legacy] (Saudi Arabia: Dār Ibn ‘Affān, 1992), 625-627.

⁹²⁴ al-Nu‘mān b. Thābit Abū Ḥanīfah, *al-Fiqh al-Akbar* [The Great Jurisprudence], (UAE: Maktabat al-Furqān, 1999), 108; Ahmad b. Muhammad Ibn Ḥanbal, *Uṣūl al-Sunnah* [Foundations of the Sunnah], (Saudi Arabia: Dār al-Manār, 1990), 42-47; Ibn Ḥajar, *Fath al-Bārī*, , XIII, 8; Muhammad b. ‘Alā’ al-Dīn Ibn Abī al-‘Izz, *Sharḥ al-Ṭaḥāwīyyah* [Commentary on the Creed of al-Ṭaḥāwī], (Saudi Arabia: Ministry of Religious Affairs, 1997), 373-374; Muhammad Amīn Ibn ‘Ābidīn, *Radd al-Mukhtār ‘alā al-Durr al-Mukhtār* [Commentary of the Book ‘Durr al-Mukhtār’] (Beirut: Dār al-Fikr, 1992), IV, 264-265; Abū Shujā‘ al-Aẓḥarī, *al-Muẓāharāt al-*

It is pertinent to explain that a few matters attributed to Ibn ‘Umar here may also be derived from some prophetic traditions. However, these traditions lacked practical demonstration. The absence of a practical role model caused a difference in the companions’ approaches towards dealing with *fitan*. The role of Ibn ‘Umar and other similar companions removed this ambiguity.

Conclusion

Regarding Ibn ‘Umar, it may be said that he followed a bottom-up transformation approach which does not intend to influence a society by gaining power in any way. Rather, it aims to persuade people (through education, counselling, political participation, and preaching), influence the influencers, and ultimately lead to the change with top-down approach. Historical events show that in the approach of Ibn ‘Umar, there was an appeal among the companions for Caliph ‘Alī and ‘Ā’isha who were rivals in the battle of the Camel.

The companions who implicitly or explicitly praised his viewpoint, their number reaches seven and all of them are prominent, well-known personalities and were present in the times of unrest. In the generation of the successors (*tābi‘ūn*), the number rises to sixteen and their favorable sayings in support of his stance may clearly be seen. All these held a swaying influence in their respective societies which included caliphs, nobility, founders of juristic and mystic schools, traditionists, intellectuals and reformers. Amongst them, there are those whose parents had remained very much a part of *fitan* battles but Ibn ‘Umar’s stance changed their views. For example, Ibn Ḥanafiya's father ‘Alī and Mūsā's father Ṭalḥa were rivals in the battle of the Camel. Besides, there are other influential personalities who were influenced by Ibn ‘Umar’s position, including: his children ‘Abd Allāh and Sālim, his son in law ‘Urwa b. al-Zubayr, his niece and mother of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Laylā bint ‘Āsim, Sa‘īd b. al-Musayyib, ‘Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Sajjād, ‘Abd Allāh b. Muḥayrīz, ‘Irāk b. Mālīk, Sulaymān b. ‘Abd al-Malik, ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz, al-Sha‘abī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī, ‘Amr b. Dīnār, etc.

Moreover, these personalities did not belong to any single specific province of the Islamic world. Rather they were scattered across the vast Islamic empire. Later key personalities in the generation of followers of the successors e.g., Caliph Abū Ja‘far al-Manṣūr (d.158/775), the

Silmiyyay min ‘Awjab al-Wājibāt al-shar‘iyyah – li mādhā? ... wa kayf? [Peaceful demonstrations are among the most important legal duties - why? ... and how?], URL: <https://al-maktaba.org/book/32364>, 75-83; “al-Khurūj ‘alā al-Ḥākīm – Ru‘yah Shar‘iyyah [Rebellion – An Islamic Legal Perspective]”, *Ismamweb*, published: 28/06/2011, accessed: 24/07/2021, <<https://www.islamweb.net/ar/fatwa/159845> >الخروج-على-الحاكم-رؤية شرعية/

well-renowned scholars like Sufyān al-Thawrī and Imām Mālik etc., kept up this trend of holding Ibn ‘Umar’s viewpoint.

Different schools of thought had started to form amongst/after the followers of the successors. The mainstream Muslims had gathered under the *Ahl al-Sunnah* juristic and theological school of thought. Ibn ‘Umar had an impact on *Ahl al-Sunnah*’s stance regarding *fitan*: be it ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom or the battles that took place during ‘Alī’s caliphate, the abdication of Imām Ḥasan or Mu‘āwiyā’s era, Imām Ḥusayn’s martyrdom or Yazīd’s allegiance, be it Ibn al-Zubayr or his opponent Umayyad rulers – in all these matters Ibn ‘Umar’s viewpoint has been adopted by the great majority of *Ahl al-Sunnah* and most juristic and theological schools supported it. Ibn ‘Umar is not the only person to shape the ideas of *Ahl al-Sunnah* but he was one of the leading figures in the establishment of the mainstream Muslim community. Ibn ‘Umar deserves the place of pride in this regard and the impactful role that fell to Ibn ‘Umar is rarely found.

7. Chapter Seven: Ibn ‘Umar and Leadership

After examination of Ibn ‘Umar’s life during *fitan* (in chapters three-five) and the rich legacy he left behind (in chapter six), a pertinent question arises ‘how come he successfully led a movement though there were conflicting opinions about his leadership abilities?’. This chapter shall try to answer this question.

Leadership is as ancient theme as the human society itself and has been studied from multiple perspectives. The theorists have presented dozens of theories with focus on various aspects. These include traits of a leader, his/her behaviors, motives, leader as an integrated totality of motives, leader’s conditions, situations, functions, and the like.⁹²⁵

Unending series of theories suggest that leadership is a complex issue and the reasons for the emergence of a great leader cannot be covered in entirety.⁹²⁶ There may be many other motives leading to the rise of a leader other than those highlighted above such as historical reasons, geographical causes, national motives, the presence of multiple leaders simultaneously, diverse grounds for the followership, etc. A few of such reasons related to Ibn ‘Umar have already been discussed in subchapter 6.1.1.

In this regard, the trait theories are considered the oldest that also hold key significance amongst the theories presented about leadership. This may be understood from the fact that twelve percent of the keywords in the published material on leadership from 1990 to 2004 are ‘personality’ and ‘leadership’. Likewise, it comes forth from the conclusions of the critics who have opposed the trait theory that “individual differences can still predict leader effectiveness”.⁹²⁷ Therefore, prior to review Ibn ‘Umar as a leader, his personality should be examined in the light of a famous trait theory ‘the Big Five’ to pave the way for understanding his type of leadership. The reason for choosing the Big Five is that ‘it is the most widely

⁹²⁵ Allio, R.J. (2013), "Leaders and leadership – many theories, but what advice is reliable?", *Strategy & Leadership*, Vol. 41 No. 1, pp. 4-14. <https://doi-org.ezproxy2.acu.edu.au/10.1108/10878571311290016> ; *Global Definitions of Leadership and Theories of Leadership Development: Literature Review*, University of Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership, 5, accessed on: 17/03/2022, https://www.britishcouncil.org/sites/default/files/final_leadership_composite_report_with_references_26-06-17.pdf

⁹²⁶ Allio, R.J. (2013), "Leaders and leadership".

⁹²⁷ “The History of Leadership Theories”, *Lumen Learning | Online Materials & Resources for Higher Ed*, accessed on: 17/03/2022, <https://courses.lumenlearning.com/wmopen-organizationalbehavior/chapter/the-history-of-leadership-theories/>.

accepted and researched personality model in individual differences research’⁹²⁸ and ‘may represent a universal legacy of the human species’.⁹²⁹ Thus, subchapter 7.1 will briefly examine Ibn ‘Umar’s personality, subchapter 7.2 will look into the features of his leadership whereas subchapter 7.3 shall be critically discussed to identify the type of leadership that Ibn ‘Umar offers.

This chapter has two arguments: First, for Ibn ‘Umar the obedience to the Prophet had a vast meaning. He saw the Prophet as a leader whom he would follow in every aspect of his life. Second, Ibn ‘Umar was an introvert with reserved nature and, therefore, the leadership model he could offer, may be described in diverse titles like prophetic or *mujaddid* leadership styles.

7.1 Ibn ‘Umar’s Personality

There are several ways to gauge human personality in psychology. One of these is to focus on the personality traits. Of these traditionally five human traits are generally acknowledged which are known as the Big Fives:

- 1- Openness
- 2- Conscientiousness
- 3- Extroversion-Introversion
- 4- Agreeableness
- 5- Neuroticism

The high or low level of any of these traits determines the personality of a person. The first quality is that of Openness to experience. Its high-level leads one to explore, to be eager, inquisitive, and adventurous that enables him to undergo intriguingly novel experiences. On the contrary, its low-level leads to sticking to same habits, shrinking from new experiences and a non-adventurous personality. The second quality is conscientiousness. Its high-level leads to high sense of responsibility, dependability, discipline, and achievement-focus. On the contrary, its low-level may lead to spontaneity, freewheeling and carelessness.

The most prominent attribute of the Big Five is extroversion-introversion. This is like two sides of the same coin. The more a person is extrovert, the more likely he is to be a social butterfly

⁹²⁸ Satchell, L., Morris, P., Mills, C. et al. Evidence of Big Five and Aggressive Personalities in Gait Biomechanics. *Journal of Nonverbal Behavior* 41, 35–44 (2017). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10919-016-0240-1>.

⁹²⁹ Piechurska-Kuciel, Ewa. The Big Five in SLA. (Cham: Springer International Publishing AG, 2020), 31.

(dynamic, networking, charismatic, personally gregarious), chatty, sociable, one who draws energy from the crowd and an assertive speaker without being aggressive. On the contrary, an introvert is a loner who enjoys working in a small group, has spiritual tendencies and with better analytical skills or a person contemplative by nature.

The fourth attribute is Agreeableness that measures enthusiasm and kindness in a personality. The more a person is agreeable by nature, the more trusting, helpful, and compassionate, he would be for others. His counterpart personality is being disagreeable, cold, and comparatively less cooperative. The fifth trait is of neuroticism and its high-level leads to moody nature and such states of mind like anxiety, worry, fear, anger, frustration, envy, jealousy, guilt, depression, and loneliness. On the other hand, the emotionally stable people are even-keeled.⁹³⁰

If Ibn ‘Umar’s personality is viewed in the light of these Big Five, then it becomes clear that leaving hometown in childhood with his parents to settle in Medina and being prone to spending a rigorous life pattern since the early days of Islam had a profound effect on him. He strove hard to follow the Prophet in all aspects of life, to know more about the different aspects of Islam and to remain active in various areas of Islamic state and act virtuously, his strong manhood and his peaceful indulgence in the political arena belie his personality trait of being open to experiment and experience. However, his high level of consciousness towed his passionate desires, leveled and channelized them in other directions. For this, he worshipped devoutly and profusely like fasting, meditation, performed yearly *hajj* / *‘umrah* on regular basis and strengthened himself through his other religious, educational, and social engagements. He describes this himself, ‘I have never been happier about anything after embracing Islam than that my heart was least enticed towards different kinds of desires’.⁹³¹

The predominant trait of high consciousness rendered his personality a high sense of responsibility, dependability, discipline and achievement-focusness. He was so virtuous and dependable that both the warring parties reposed trust in him. He was disciplined to the extent that an eminent senior companion, Ibn Mas‘ūd used to extol his self-restraint and deemed it better than in any other Qurayshi youth.⁹³² Ibn ‘Umar continued to lead life of a role model in his society from youth to old age. He was described as an ideal in ‘self-control from worldly

⁹³⁰ Stephanie Pappas, Ben Biggs, *Personality Traits & Personality Types: What is Personality?*, published on: November 04, 2021, <<https://www.livescience.com/41313-personality-traits.html>> ; Piechurska-Kuciel, Ewa. The Big Five in SLA, 30.

⁹³¹ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 159.

⁹³² al-Dhahabī, *Siyar*, IV, 307.

pleasures' by Ibn Mas'ūd. His personality was presented 'flawless' by Ḥudhayfa b. al-Yamān. Abū Mūsā al-Ash'arī represented him 'to be very competent for caliphate and able to revive his father 'Umar's era'. Caliph 'Uthmān and Caliph 'Alī wanted to appoint him a judge and a governor respectively. He could easily become a caliph through means considered nonstandard by Islam i.e., through coercive or unfair means, but he remained committed to the principles he called others for (refer to subchapter 6.1 for more details).

As far as the most significant trait amongst the Big Five i.e., extroversion/introversion is concerned; there are many incidents which indicate that Ibn 'Umar was not an extrovert by nature, e.g., his shyness to answer the question of the Prophet about the tree whose leaves do not fall, his keeping distance from political or military positions and his justification for not claiming the caliphate after the death of Mu'āwiyā by saying, 'Shyness (*ḥayā*) does not bring except good'.⁹³³ It is probably his introvert personality that some contemporaries rated him being less of a 'leader-like'⁹³⁴ like Mu'āwiyā or Ḥajjāj (see subchapter 4.1.4).⁹³⁵

Being an introvert does not mean that he was afraid to face gatherings. How boldly he could face the crowd can be seen in his speech to the protesters who had gathered against 'Uthmān, similarly in his meetings with Mu'āwiyā on the issue of Yazīd's caliphate and also in his address to the rebels against Yazīd. These historic instances dispel the objection of his peers of not being capable. Rather, he did not draw energy from the gathered crowd as is mostly the case with introverts. Like introverts, Ibn 'Umar reflected 'a strategy of observing carefully before acting, thus avoiding dangers, failures, and wasted energy, which would require a nervous system specially designed to observe and detect subtle differences that others miss'.⁹³⁶

Being an introvert blessed him with refined understanding, creativity, analytical and spiritual qualities. As an expert in numerous Islamic disciplines, he had a far-sighted approach. He envisaged future events in light of past incidents and would consistently allude to the current circumstances as a consequence of specific past events (see chapter three-five). He would

⁹³³ Ibn Al-'Arabī, *al-'Awāṣim*, 225-26.

⁹³⁴ Peter O'Connor and Andrew Spark (2017), "Introverts are often reluctant to lead — but that doesn't mean they aren't capable", *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*, retrieved 17/03/2022, <<https://www.abc.net.au/news/2017-09-26/introverts-are-reluctant-leaders-but-they-are-capable/8988250>>.

⁹³⁵ Al-Faswī, *Al-Ma'rifa wa Al-Tārīkh*, I, 492

⁹³⁶ Carol Lee (2015), "The Value of Introverts in the Workplace: Why Employers Should Take Notice", retrieved 17/03/2022, <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/value-introverts-workplace-why-employers-should-take-notice-carol-lee/>.

analyze situations through spiritual and moral reasoning. It was owing to all these distinguishing merits of head and heart that the latter people were compelled to call him a scholar of *fitan* incidents.

Agreeableness was present in Ibn ‘Umar’s nature to the hilt. If there were any uncontroversial, dependable, unbiased, sympathetic, and honest personality during all *fitan* events, I believe it was that of Ibn ‘Umar. Moreover, he had the least traces of neuroticism in his personality; hence he was a pleasant, well-contented, happy and a popular person.

7.2 Ibn ‘Umar’s Leadership Features

After examining Ibn ‘Umar’s personality, it is now time to present an analysis of the nature of his leadership. The scholarly resources mention multiple definitions of ‘leadership’, one of which is given as, ‘Leadership is a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal’.⁹³⁷

If viewed in light of this definition, Ibn ‘Umar was a companion who impressed people through multiple aspects of his personality and was followed immensely. These include a unique style of his adoration for God and the Prophet, piety, his services at the grassroot level and scholarly achievements. However, if viewed from the perspective of the battles in the early Islamic history (*fitan*), Ibn ‘Umar appears as a person who had striven to resolve conflict over the caliphate amongst numerous Muslim factions and procure peace. These efforts in various forms continued for almost four decades in different situations. His steady and consistent struggle came into effect gradually. Initially, the influential figures came under his influence through whom the mainstream Muslim faction, *Ahl al-Sunnah* accepted his model (refer to subchapters 6.1 and 6.2).

Determination of Ibn ‘Umar’s leadership style requires the study of his basic leadership features. It will bear two benefits: First, comparison of these features with contemporary leadership styles, and second, it will ultimately serve to determine the nature of his leadership.

7.2.1 Leadership Background

From religious perspective, not only Ibn ‘Umar himself was a close companion of the Prophet Muḥammad but also his father, ‘Umar had a history of leadership of his tribe ‘Adī, the Quraysh

⁹³⁷ Peter G. Northouse, *Leadership*, 7th ed. (Los Angeles, Calif.: Sage, 2016), 6.

and the Muslim *ummah*. His sister, Ḥafṣa too was the wife of the Prophet and a leading woman of Muslim society. Amongst his progeny significant religious personalities like Sālim were born (see chapter six). Moreover, his natural talents were groomed by education and training. His boyhood was enlightened by the experiences of *Ṣuffa* shelter in the Prophet's Mosque. The diligent personality of his father – a great Arab and Muslim leader, 'Umar has played a significant role in his training inside and outside the house (see subchapter 2.1 and 2.3). All this had given him a keen insight and awareness about the intricate working of key political affairs.

Ibn 'Umar did not have the traditional surface bonding with Islam, the new religion in the Arabian Peninsula. Rather he had a deeply religious and emotional attachment with it. Incidents like feeling himself before God during worship, visualizing his meeting with his Lord in future in the light of his experiences taking place with his slave in the present, giving away his favorite things in the way of God, his comment that 'the one who deceives us in the matters of God, let us be deceived in God's name'⁹³⁸ in response to people who would comment that these slaves pretend to be good for liberation on account of their good conduct reflect this deep affiliation in religious and social life (see chapter two). It also indicates that he bore well with the phenomenon of being deceived rather than being a deceiver. I think, this is also very prophetic way to show how tolerant and accommodating person he was.

Besides his attachment to Islam, Ibn 'Umar was closely associated with the Prophet himself. His devotion was the result of his highest form of connection with Prophet Muḥammad. An attempt to enliven the prophetic character in his life immortalized Ibn 'Umar's affiliation with the Prophet. His unique lifestyle attracted a great following among the *ummah* and he 'became a pattern for future generations'⁹³⁹ (see subchapters 2.1.5 and 2.6).

From political perspective, Ibn 'Umar belonged to Banu 'Adī, a significant branch of the Quraysh (though less influential than the Hashemites and the Umayyads). Despite young age, he remained a very vigorous companion during the life of the Prophet. After the death of the Prophet, he lived a highly active political and military life during the reigns of the first three caliphs. He played an important role by working closely with each caliph. His political stature gained new heights when his father became the second caliph. After the demise of his father, he was an advisor of the council made for the selection of new caliph. However, 'Uthmān's

⁹³⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 460.

⁹³⁹ Veccia Vaglieri, "'Abd Allāh".

martyrdom brought some distance between him and the coming caliphs owing to shifting of capital city away from Medina (see chapters two-three). But his significant position remained intact in almost all the key decisions for his tribal, political, and religious prominence (see chapters four-five).

Ibn 'Umar held a special place in different Islamic disciplines of knowledge (*tafsīr, ḥadīth, fiqh, kalām, sīrah, tārikh*, etc.) and his intellectual leadership proceeds his political and military leadership. He had a deep-seated belief in Islam and the same had been the main aim of his life i.e., to strive hard to preserve the Muslim faith through his acumen and deep understanding of the Qur'ān and sunnah. This was his full-time engagement and he deemed it way superior to any political gain. Besides, his focus lay at the grass root level for instance, liberation of hundreds of slaves, serving the weaker lot in society, education, edification, and training of the people, etc., (see subchapters 2.5 and 2.6). In contrast to many political figures who are always visible, Ibn 'Umar is invisible but his efforts are very fruitful. So, visibility of invisible Ibn 'Umar is far better than invisibility of the visible political figures. Even Gospel's saying 'You will know them by their fruits' (Matthew, 7:15-20) comes true for him.

7.2.2 Non-Traditional Leadership

The constructive role during the *fitan* period is a vital aspect of Ibn 'Umar's life. However, he held a non-traditional leadership style i.e., declining any officially or politically recognized designation and serving voluntarily. Regardless, he passed a spirited and dynamic life. He held leadership as a senior companion, a scholar, social activist, a responsible member of society and as a tribal elder who supported the government when needed (see chapters three-five). Choosing the non-traditional style of leadership was also a peculiar quality of Ibn 'Umar. He, thus, laid down a tradition of non-traditional leadership which was followed by great scholars of the coming generations like Sa'īd b. al-Musayyib, Imām Abū Ḥanīfa and Sufyān al-Thawrī, etc.

Ibn 'Umar may not be studied as a personality who possessed extraordinary qualities. He had a balanced personality with blended qualities (see section 6.3.1). He is an amazing companion, not for being superior to anyone but for playing a highly significant role in a crucial period of Islamic history. He played this role at such a time when the Islamic world faced a dire political crisis.

During the last days of ‘Uthmān’s caliphate, he was amongst those who were very close to the caliph and came promptly whenever called for consultation. His suggestions to the caliph like employing ‘Alī’s influence or fulfilling the demands of protesters or his intimidation of the protesters by telling them about the deadly consequences of ‘Uthmān’s assassination and the like testify that he had no ambiguity about protesters being in the wrong. He had foretold the protesters before the caliph’s martyrdom that ‘the *ummah* shall lose its unity forever after that’ (see chapter three). Ibn ‘Umar’s ability to foresee, read the events very well and know what it would cost in future has been discussed in chapter 6.3.1. In other words, behind his authentic predictions, there was a rationality, pre-knowledge of his community and engagement with many people.

Likewise, a few incidents that happened before and after ‘Uthmān’s martyrdom testify to his moral reasoning. For example, he told someone who intended to kill ‘Uthmān, ‘this is merely a dispute over the worldly gains and wealth. One who receives from the caliph is happy and the one who does not, becomes unhappy’. Once he told the protesters that if this old man (*shaykh*) got killed in such a way, then peace can never ever be regained. Similarly, the protesters came to him after ‘Uthmān’s assassination for the allegiance oath. He replied, ‘Certainly there will be a retribution for the martyrdom of Caliph. By God! Under no condition, I shall face this (as a caliph) ...’ (see chapter three).⁹⁴⁰ Moral reasoning was an integral part of his personality, and he reviewed matters from the religio-ethical perspective throughout the *fitan* period which is like a spinal column for the ethical and transformational leadership.

7.2.3 Ibn ‘Umar and Conflict

During the long period of *fitan*, a distinct feature of Ibn ‘Umar’s leadership was that he is not part of any conflict, rather he endeavored to play his role in its resolution. If he desired, he could easily become part a conflict in many incidents happening around him, but he did not. For example, upon martyrdom of his father, ‘Umar, two suspects got killed at the hands of his brother, ‘Ubayd Allāh who was trying to avenge his father’s blood. A dispute arose that ‘Ubayd Allāh could have dealt with differently. Likewise, after the demise of ‘Umar, the Qur’ān compiled during Abū Bakr’s era reached Ḥafṣa. Marwān, Mu‘āwiya’s governor over Medina, sought it from her in order to burn it away so as to avert any prospective conflict, but she refused to give it. Ibn ‘Umar handed it over to Marwān after Ḥafṣa’s death. Moreover, had Ibn ‘Umar not timely intervened, Ḥafṣa would have taken part in the conflict of the battle of the Camel. These instances reveal that Ibn ‘Umar opted to be part of resolution

⁹⁴⁰ Al-Tamīmī, *Al-Fitnah*, 92; Al-Ṭabarī, *Tārīkh*, IV, 432; Ibn al-Jawzī, *al-Muntaẓim*, V, 65.

despite of valid possible causes of contention before him. There are many such instances from his personal life too (see chapter two). His conduct remained uniform throughout the times of *fitan*. Almost all conflicts: the Camel, Şifīn, the allegiance for Yazīd, martyrdom of Imām Ḥusayn, the revolt against Yazīd in Mecca and Medina etc., (see chapters 3-4) testify that he acted as a mediator who strove for peace and resolution. Ibn ‘Umar’s non-indulgence in conflicts appeared to some as his indifference, to some opportunism and to some ignorance. Thus, he was criticized as well (see subchapter 5.2.3.5).

Ibn ‘Umar had a high regard for all the companions and his brief but succinct comment in this regard is as follows, ‘Ever I found my companions (*ṣaḥāba*) divided in opinion (over any issue), I dared not oppose (any of them) lest I should not catch up with him/her (in heavens)’.⁹⁴¹ If this saying is applied to the *fitan* battles of the Camel and Şifīn (see subchapters 3.2.2 - 3.2.3), then taking part in these conflicts from any single side would mean to oppose the companions of the other side. More so the way Ibn ‘Umar had kept names and the nature of dispute vague, indicates that he held great respect for them. In addition, he deemed seeking their company in heavens way beyond and above any dispute over any issue.

‘Alī was a more senior companion at the time of the Camel battle. As a Caliph, ‘Alī’s responsibilities and nature of leadership was different from Ibn ‘Umar’s one. At that time, ‘Alī was at the peak of his leadership role whereas maturity of Ibn ‘Umar’s viewpoint and his role was yet in its early formative stages. Therefore, Ibn ‘Umar’s evasion of the conflict was very much before people, but the way he approached and addressed it remained concealed from public eye until the consequences came out.

7.2.4 Creative Approach to Problem Solving

Ibn ‘Umar did not become a part of the battle of the Camel, but as an individual he did his utmost to resolve it. He had taken oath of allegiance to ‘Alī prior to the battle. He offered same advice to ‘Alī and the group of his opponent companions, al-Zubayr, Ṭalḥa and ‘Ā’isha that they should call an assembly of key companions in Medina to consult and decide whether to take to battlefield or not. He stopped his sister, Ḥafṣa twice from becoming a part of the battle. Later, key personalities from both sides were not happy with the outcome of the battle. Moreover, distinguished personalities from each side i.e., (‘Alī and ‘Ā’isha) are on record to have approved Ibn ‘Umar’s stance positively (see chapter three). In other words, it implies that Ibn ‘Umar (and other like-minded companions) played a constructive role in bridging the gap between the leaders of warring factions on the occasion of the

⁹⁴¹ Sa‘īd b. Manṣūr, *al-Sunan*, no. 2976; Ibn Abī Shayba, *al-Muṣannaḥ*, no. 34638.

Camel and had held *ummah* in harmony despite this temporary clash. Likewise, the words of appreciation for Ibn ‘Umar by these personalities had played an important part in rendering Ibn ‘Umar the position of a role model (see chapter six).

7.2.5 Ibn ‘Umar and Dialogue

Dialogue is an important key to leadership so much that it is said that leadership is dialogue. As it is only through dialogues that opposing viewpoint may be understood and one’s own viewpoint may be explained, likewise stronger reasons in support of one’s viewpoint may be gathered. A distinguishing aspect of Ibn ‘Umar’s leadership is that he tried to resolve each conflict of *fitan* through negotiation without partaking in any violent activity (see subchapter 7.2.3). However, he was almost universally present in all attempts of reconciliation and resolution. For example, in the negotiations between ‘Uthmān and the protesters, his advice to both the warring factions to consult the people of Medina prior to the Camel conflict, his participation in the arbitration after Şiffin, his partaking in reconciliation efforts between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiya, his multiple meetings with Mu‘āwiya before nominating Yazīd as caliph, his attempt to dissuade the people of Medina from insurrection, his counselling to those who refused to take Yazīd’s oath of allegiance, his word to exercise restraint from revolt to Ibn al-Zubayr and his key allies. His sole weapon against *fitan* was dialogue that reflected his scholarship and acumen.

Later Ibn ‘Umar’s take on *fitan* during these dialogues was adopted unanimously by mainstream Muslims i.e., *Ahl al-Sunnah* and the phrases present in his dialogues made on various occasions evolved into a narrative against coercion and violence. These narratives were of two types. In the first narrative, the oppressive rulers were advised to form government with public consent. He elaborated on it in detail on the occasion of arbitration, multiple times to Mu‘āwiya on the issue of Yazīd’s allegiance and to Marwān after Yazīd’s death (see chapters three-five). Whereas, in the second narrative, the rebellious were barred from undertaking violent or defiant means. He presented it before Mu‘āwiya and ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ in arbitration (*tahkīm*) and before Mu‘āwiya upon the exercise of force against ‘Alī, and before Yazīd and later to opponents of Marwān and ‘Abd al-Malik after they took up caliphate (see chapters three -five).

7.2.6 Motivation of Conflicting Entities

The distinct quality of Ibn ‘Umar’s style of leadership is to motivate key personalities involved in the conflict for its resolution. In this regard, those people upon whom he could prevail his personal influence were stopped straightaway. For example, what he did with his sister, Ḥafṣa before the battle

of the Camel (see chapter three) or the way he gathered all members of his household at the time of revolt against Yazīd and told them that whoever took part in rebellion would have to sever his connection with him first (see chapter four). Those people who were beyond his influence, he would do his utmost to stop them by keeping their religious stature before himself. On the incident of the Camel, the leaders of both the contesting factions were senior to Ibn ‘Umar. Had the people of Medina been gathered for consultation, as was suggested by Ibn ‘Umar, then there would have been different results. Ibn ‘Umar admonished Mu‘āwīya through a letter prior to the Camel,⁹⁴² likewise, the way he tried to explicate the situation to Imām Ḥusayn before Yazīd took control is an excellent sample reflecting his deep-seated love, respect, and his good will (see chapter four). In addition, Ibn al-Zubayr, Muṣ‘ab b. al-Zubayr, Ibn al-Muṭī‘, ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥanzala, Ibn Ḥanafiya, ‘Abd al-Malik b. Marwān, Hajjāj b. Yūsuf were among the towering personalities involved in these *fitan* battles whom Ibn ‘Umar had tried to dissuade (see chapters four-five).

7.2.7 A Balanced leadership

Knowledge is of vital importance in leadership so much that it is said that leadership is knowledge. Moreover, it is also added that ‘True leaders work with others to translate their knowledge into initiatives that benefit their organization’.⁹⁴³ Putting knowledge into practice needs a healthy body as the saying goes ‘A healthy mind in a healthy body’. The Qur’ān also gives due importance to both when it comes to leadership. It mentions ‘good stature in knowledge and physique’⁹⁴⁴ the cause of Saul’s selection as the next king of the Jews. The same principle may also apply to Ibn ‘Umar.

If Ibn ‘Umar’s reasoning is reviewed in terms of political stability and rejection of violence, then it turns out to be a comprehensive strategy that covers contemporary worldly and religious knowledge. Hereby a few examples of his reasoning shall be touched briefly. When Ibn ‘Umar was instigated to take active part in the battles of *fitan* in the light of the Qur’ānic verse 49: 9, he refuted it with another verse 4: 93 (see chapter five). When the verse 2: 193 was recited as an attempt to persuade him to take to battlefield, he explained the verse using *tafsīr* scholarship in its real contexts (see chapter five). In light of *sīrah* and *tārīkh*, he counselled both sides to consult the people of Medina before the battle of the Camel in emulation of the same conduct that he had witnessed in the life of Prophet personally and reigns of caliphs Abū Bakr and

⁹⁴² Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, II, 409-15.

⁹⁴³ “Knowledge is Power. Leadership is Greatness.”, Stanford Group Ltd., retrieved 17/03/2022, <<https://stratford.group/knowledge-leadership/>>

⁹⁴⁴ al-Qur’ān 2: 247.

‘Umar (see subchapter 3.2). He tried to restrain people (e.g., Ibn al-Zubayr, Ibn Muṭī and ‘Abd Allāh b. Ḥanzala, etc.) on many occasions by reasoning from *ḥadīth*.⁹⁴⁵ The way Ibn ‘Umar tried to dissuade Imām Ḥusayn by interpreting the Qur’ān and *ḥadīth* reflects not only his devotion and reverence for the Prophet’s household but shows his command over numerous Islamic disciplines of knowledge⁹⁴⁶ (see 4.2).

On several occasions, he expressed opinions on issues like establishing caliphate only after the public consent. Besides, he advocated for free, fair, and honest politics and the sanctity of human life and the like, that testifies his expertise in law and politics. The nature of his reasoning indicates that Ibn ‘Umar had already deliberated over *fitan* from multiple perspectives. His views on *fitan* wars (see chapter three-five), gradual growth in influence on the influencers from the generations of *ṣaḥābah*, *tābi‘ūn* and *tābi‘ū al-tābi‘īn* (see chapter 6.1) and then manifesting into the viewpoint of *Ahl al-Sunnah* show scholarly nature of his stance (see chapter 6.2).

Ibn ‘Umar’s knowledge and guidance were not mere narration, rather, they were based on his experiences learnt from practical involvement in Islamic history. The nature of this involvement decided the nature of impact he left. By choice or by instinct, he was involved in *fitan* as an advisor and guide, not as a rival and competitor; therefore, the intellectual and spiritual aspects in his leadership role prevail over the political ones.

In terms of health, Ibn ‘Umar was very good since his early childhood. He was allowed at the age of fourteen to participate in the battle of the trench to defend Medina. His military career continued till his sixties (see chapter two-four). Fasting, less eating and a healthy lifestyle kept him active even in his eighties. At the age of eighty-three, he was healthy especially mentally. The last years of his life are very rich in the formation of his narratives against religious extremism and establishment of the caliphate with public consent. He could have lived few more years if not wounded by one of Ḥajjāj’s men (see chapter five).

7.2.8 Controlling High Emotions

Ibn ‘Umar had undergone similar emotional state as the personalities who opposed the Umayyads’ politics. He too desired that the government should emulate the Prophet’s era or the Rashidun caliphate rather than monarchy. However, he was of the view that the violent conflicts

⁹⁴⁵ Ibn Kathīr, *al-Bidāyah*, VI,259, VIII, 255-256, 173-175.

⁹⁴⁶ Ibn Ḥibbān, *al-Ṣaḥīḥ*, 6968; Ibn al-A‘tham, *al-Futūḥ*, V,25; Ibid.

may lead to further deterioration. History mentions many such incidents when Ibn ‘Umar had controlled his high emotions with great difficulty. For example, one such incident took place during arbitration process between Imām Ḥasan and Mu‘āwiyā. Had Ibn ‘Umar not showed self-restraint and patience on Mu‘āwiyā’s negative remarks, it could have led to discord and hostility at that crucial time (see subchapter 3.3.2).⁹⁴⁷ Similarly, another incident happened during the arbitration between Caliph ‘Alī and Mu‘awiyā. Ibn ‘Umar ignored ‘Amr b. al-‘Āṣ’ remark ‘neither he himself eats nor lets others eat’ when Ibn ‘Umar’s name was proposed for the caliphate, but Ibn al-Zubayr noticed and tried to explain it to him that ‘Amr wants something in return for nominating him for the caliphate. It was a critical moment, and a little greed could have changed the entire course of his life. But he answered: “I will neither become a caliph by paying bribe nor will I help anyone to become a caliph by taking a bribe”⁹⁴⁸ (see subchapter 3.2.3). Similarly, to gain support for Yazīd’s caliphate, Ibn ‘Umar declined lucrative offers, faced life threats and character assassination, but strong emotions of fear, greed or anger could not defeat his patience and courage (see subchapters 4.1.3 – 4.1.4).

7.2.9 Equilibrium between Confrontation and Unity

It has been discussed how Ibn ‘Umar had maintained a balance between confrontation and harmony amongst the troops in the battles of Banū Jadhīma and *ridda* which in itself is an exemplary behavior in leadership (see subchapters 2.1.3 and 2.2). He did not limit this practice to these battles alone, rather this principle has consistently been his *modus operandi* during the *fitan* years.

The *fitan* battles that revolve around caliphate wherein the Umayyads had taken control perforce (especially during the second wave of *fitan*) whereas on the other side, there were those people who wished to revert it to the pattern of Rashidun caliphate. Ibn ‘Umar was in complete agreement with the latter group. He too struggled for it, but it was only limited to peaceful measures like counselling, criticism, etc., so that it may not harm the overall unity of the *ummah*. The principle of general good will had made him very diligent and he would do strict scholarly and methodical criticism in personal meetings but would not behave the same in the masses lest it should arouse the public sentiment and turn into a propaganda (see chapters four-five). He would keep criticizing till alteration was possible before a final verdict was

⁹⁴⁷ Ibn Sa‘d, *al-Ṭabaqāt*, IV, 182; Ibn Al-A‘rābī, *Al-Mu‘jam*, no. 1595.

⁹⁴⁸ al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, V, 464; Abū Nu‘aym, *Hilyat al-Awliyā’*, I, 294.

passed by the rulers. However, once the pronouncement was in place and implemented, then he would advise to practice perseverance to maintain general peace (see subchapters 4.1- 4.2).

7.2.10 A Perfectionist-cum-Pragmatic

Ibn 'Umar advocated establishment of an exemplary Islamic caliphate where caliph is a competent person elected by people and no one should reach power and key posts using unfair means. In the same way, he was a proponent of running the caliphate with justice and trust. But the existential political and social situation did not blind him. As a leader, he seems to respect tradition of the Prophet and that of the first two caliphs and wished to continue their legacy. But reading the signs of times guided him that it required favorable conditions which he could not see during *fitan* battles. In other words, he seems able to distinguish between a beautiful ideal (public consensus) and the harsh ground reality (tribal rivalry). He, therefore, showed some leniency towards the Umayyads' monarchy, but it was only for the sake of peace and unity and not for personal gains. He had the chance to win caliphate thrice when one contesting group assured him its full support. Later the same group battled against the opponents, defeated them, and came into power. Ibn 'Umar's response remained uniform throughout 'He was not willing to accept caliphate without public consent'. On another occasion he said that 'Killing even two men for the sake of seven-decade long rule was not acceptable to him'. This shows that Ibn 'Umar was a perfectionist and practiced the ideal pattern for himself but would opt for pragmatism for others (see chapters three and five).

7.2.11 The Two Roles and Gradual Support

Ibn 'Umar simultaneously played two roles during *fitan*, towards the authorities and the public. First, he counselled rulers who had come to power perforce to seek public approval and secondly, advised the public to keep peace. Both these roles appeared paradoxical at times as intellectually he sided with the agitators but had acceded to those in power perforce. However, in spirit, it was not different. He was in favor of public consent in caliphate yet not at the cost of any violence or bloodshed that may mar the overall unity of the Muslim *ummah*.

Any great leader must experience opposition which was so in case of Ibn 'Umar too. But historic traditions reveal that he enjoyed support at some level too (See section 6.1). 'Support and affirmation of the leader during periods of conflict is extremely important. Conflicts with religious and political leaders, as well as rulers can be accepted with equanimity when family,

friends or disciples are supportive'.⁹⁴⁹ The historic incidents reveal that as the adverse effect of violent activities came to the fore, gradually Ibn 'Umar's viewpoint won popularity. His fame prevailed between both the conflicting groups i.e., the authorities in power and the rebels active against them (see subchapter 6.1).

The most encouraging aspect of Ibn 'Umar's message may be seen in his hope to see a caliph who would establish an ideal Islamic caliphate with public consent. On a personal level, Ibn 'Umar may be seen as a balanced, consistent, and optimistic personality. He has all the necessary conditions of leadership as his natural endowments.

It was Ibn 'Umar's wish and prayer to see such a caliph from his father's progeny during his lifetime. He was very old when his nephew, 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz came with his mother and stayed with him. Ibn 'Umar found him like his household members in conduct. The nephew was so inspired from his maternal uncle that he desired to be like him. Though Ibn 'Umar died soon after, but 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz tried to mold caliphate on the pattern of Abū Bakr and 'Umar. It is owing to these endeavors that his era is revered the most after the Rashidun caliphate (see subchapters 5.1.1 and 6.1.3).

7.3 Ibn 'Umar's Leadership Style

It is now time to determine the nature of Ibn 'Umar's leadership after a discussion on its features. Although contemporary leadership types are very interesting but concerning Ibn 'Umar, religious leadership styles may be more useful. In this regard, prophetic leadership seems quite significant as Ibn 'Umar had made it his desired goal. Another similar style is known as *mujaddid* leadership. The mention of this leadership is necessary because according to Islamic theology, a person who adopts prophetic leadership in an unprecedented manner, maintaining its high standard, can be called a *mujaddid*.

7.3.1 Prophetic leadership

If we probe for an incident that may present the essence of Ibn 'Umar's leadership, we may find it at the time of revolt in Medina against Yazīd's ascension. Ibn 'Umar addressed briefly in that critical situation which is a wholesome reflection of his personality. He was one of the leading personalities of Medina and there was enormous pressure on him for rebellion. Yet he retained a viewpoint different from the general sentiment that he gave expression in his public address. There were two key notes: first, his views over Yazīd's caliphate. Secondly, he quoted

⁹⁴⁹ Helen, *Contrast in Prophetic Leadership*, 42.

saying of the Prophet ‘modesty (*ḥayā*)’ does not bring anything but goodness’. The mention of modesty (*ḥayā*) in the context of opposing or not opposing Yazīd is very significant. It bears no other meaning but that the public opinion was built against Yazīd. It was an easy choice for Ibn ‘Umar to strengthen his political stature by addressing the public sentiments. But he was fully convinced that such a measure will invite nothing except wrath and destruction. As per the mentioned speech (see subchapter 4.2.3), Ibn ‘Umar’s opinion of Yazīd was almost the same as those who revolted in Medina. Therefore, he was not a favorite person in the eyes of the then government. Contrarily, his main forte was support at grass root level. His decision of not revolting against Yazīd made him an undesirable personality for public too. Thus, it was a difficult choice that he had to make.

Ibn ‘Umar made many such decisions during *fitan* whose worth was realized when other experiments went unsuccessful. Later his opinions turned out to be a norm amongst the mainstream Muslims, *Ahl al-Sunnah* so much so that legislation was carried out on their basis. Such a leadership may only be practiced by someone who has acumen and experience, who is consistently law-abiding and the one who has control over his desires.

If seen in the light of leadership studies then Ibn ‘Umar had the merits of ethical, transformational, introvert and silent styles of leadership. However, if to choose any single type, then the way he looked upon all the conflicting groups as one *ummah* dismissing the factional divisions, the way his treatment of issues was dominated by moral and *akhira* centric mindset, he appears to be closer to prophetic leadership style. Herein he held the exemplary personality of the Prophet and his religion before him.

7.3.2 *Mujaddid* Leadership

It will not be out of the context to discuss a specific kind of leadership, known as *mujaddid* (renewalist / revivalist) leadership in the Islamic religious literature. This type is different from the traditional political and religious leadership types amongst the Muslims, like *khalīfah* (caliph), *Imām*, *qāḍī* (jurist) or *‘ālim* (scholar). The traditional leadership types gradually became an institution and the persons appointed upon were categorically known. On the contrary the *mujaddid* leadership has maintained an ambiguous status.⁹⁵⁰

⁹⁵⁰ Jalāl al-Dīn al-Suyūṭī, *al-Tanbi’ah bi man Yab’athuh Allāh ‘alā Ra’s kull mi’ah* [Information about those who Allah Raises at the Beginning of each Century] (Riyadh: Dār al-Tawzī‘, n.d.), 15.

The basis of this leadership is a saying of the Prophet⁹⁵¹, ‘At the beginning of every century, God will raise for this *ummah* who will renew its religion for this people’.⁹⁵² The *ḥadīth* has used word *yujaddid* which means in Arabic ‘to restore something to its original state after it has decayed’.⁹⁵³ In the context of religion (*dīn*)’ it means ‘to restore religion (Qur’ān and sunnah) to its original state as it was in its early days’⁹⁵⁴ whether this restoration relates the religious texts, its meanings or practice upon its teachings. Thus, any unprecedented effort made in these three fields falls into the category of revival (*tajdīd*), whether it is made to keep the texts of the Qur’ān and sunnah in their original form; to transfer the correct meanings of these texts to the next generation and its revival⁹⁵⁵; to solve new problems in light of the original texts (*ijtihād*)⁹⁵⁶; or to prevent any innovation (*bid‘ah*) from penetration into original *dīn* (religion), etc.⁹⁵⁷

Due to linguistic, theological, and social reasons, scholars have differed on the emergence of one or more *mujaddids* (renewalists) simultaneously. Most of the scholars who opine about one *mujaddid* at a time, consider ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as the first *mujaddid*.⁹⁵⁸ Ibn Ḥajar, Ibn Kathīr, and Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī are worth mentioning among the scholars who hold the opinion of the presence of multiple *mujaddids* simultaneously from different fields i.e., *siyāsah*,

⁹⁵¹ The *ḥadīth* is not present in the more authentic collections of *ḥadīth* like al-Bukhārī and Muslim but still its reliability is attested by the *ḥadīth* experts, like al-Albānī and others. See: Muḥammad Nāṣir al-Ḍīn al-Albānī, *Silsilat al-Aḥādīth al-Ṣaḥīḥah wa shay’ min Fiqhīhā wa Fawā’idihā* [Compendium of Authentic Ḥadīths] (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Ma‘ārif, 1995-2002), no. 599; Muḥammad b. ‘Abd al-Raḥmān al-Sakhāwī, *al-Maqāṣid al-ḥasanah fī Bayān Kathīr min al-Aḥādīth al-Mushtahirah ‘alā al-‘Alsinah* [Good Intentions in the Authentication of Many Famous Ḥadīths] (Beirut: Dār al-Kitāb al-‘Arabī, 1985), 203; al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 7044.

⁹⁵² Abū Dawūd, *al-Sunan*, no. 4291.

⁹⁵³ Baṣṭāmī Muḥammad Sa’ī, *Maḥmūm Tajdīd al-Dīn* [The Concept of the Revival of Religion] (Jeddah: Markaz al-Ta’ṣīl li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Buḥūth, 2015), 17.

⁹⁵⁴ Ibid, 21; Muḥammad Ashraf al-‘Azīm Abādī, ‘*Awn al-Ma’būd* Sharḥ Sunan Abī Dawūd [Commentary of Sunan Abī Dawūd] (Beirut: Dār al-Kutub al-‘Ilmiyyah, 1994), XI, 260.

⁹⁵⁵ Baṣṭāmī, *Maḥmūm Tajdīd al-Dīn*, 22-23.

⁹⁵⁶ Ibid, 25; Zayn al-Dīn Muḥammad al-Manāwī, *Fayḍ al-Qadīr* [Commentary of Suyūṭī’s Ḥadīth Collection *al-Jāmi‘ al-Ṣaḥīḥ*] (Egypt: al-Maktabah al-Tijāriyyah al-Kubrā, 1937), I, 9.

⁹⁵⁷ Baṣṭāmī, *Maḥmūm Tajdīd al-Dīn*, 26-28.

⁹⁵⁸ al-Ḥākim, *al-Mustadrak*, no. 8593; Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, *al-Madkhal ‘ilā ‘Ilm al-Sunan* [Introduction to the Science of Sunan] (Cairo: Dār al-Yusr, n.d.), 35-37; Aḥmad b. al-Ḥusayn al-Bayhaqī, ed. al-Sayyid Aḥmad Ṣāqar, *Manāqib al-Shāfi‘ī* [The Virtues of Imām al-Shāfi‘ī] (n.p.), 55-56.

qirā'āt, tafsīr, ḥadīth, fiqh, etc. The lists of Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī and Baṣṭāmī mention fourteen such prominent personalities of the 1st/7th century.⁹⁵⁹

With reference to Ibn 'Umar, the peculiarity of these claimed fourteen *mujaddids* further increases as more than half of them were influenced by him, such as: 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Sālim, Mujaḥid, Ṭā'ūs, Al-Sha'bī, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī and Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī. The affiliation of these personalities with the position of Ibn 'Umar on *fitan* has been discussed in subchapter 6.1. Besides, another personality ('Aṭā' b. Abī Rabāḥ) from this list of *mujaddids* has also been very close to Ibn 'Umar (see subchapter 2.6). Similarly, Imām Bāqir's father 'Alī b. Ḥusayn al-Sajjād's comments on Ibn 'Umar have been mentioned in subchapter 6.1.3. All this shows a much wider influence of Ibn 'Umar on the Muslim brain.

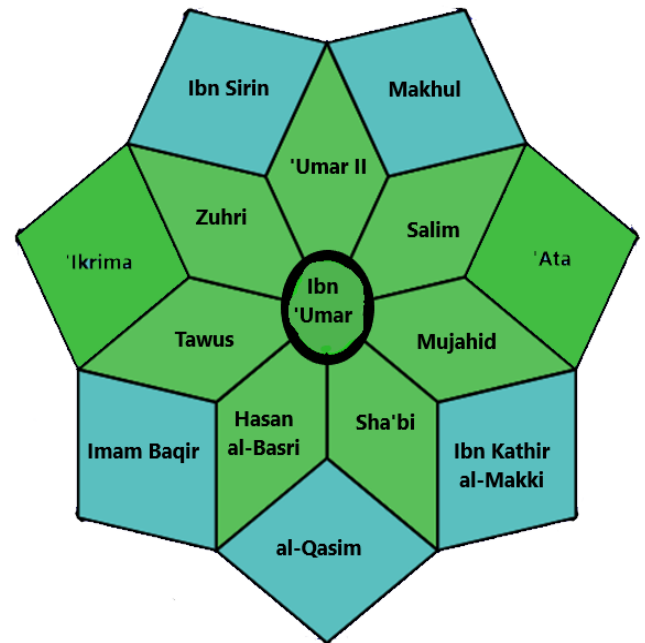


Figure 1: *Mujaddids of the 1st/7th century.*

In the context of *fitan*, the above mentioned *ḥadīth* on *mujaddid* leadership may be explained thus: since any religion is revealed in a peculiar time period, therefore, it is natural that the followers have to adapt their religious life to the changing social, political, economic, psychological and geographical conditions with the passage of time. This adaptation, sometimes, causes the current religion to deviate from the original one. Under such circumstances, God raises an individual / group of scholars to purify the *dīn* and revive the real spirit of Islam.

From the last years of the Rashidun caliphate, the political power started accumulating into the hands of such people who lacked in ability to run the caliphate according to the standardized mode of the Prophet and the Rashidun caliphs (see chapters three-five). Under these conditions,

⁹⁵⁹ 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz, Imām al-Bāqir, al-Qāsim b. Muḥammad b. Abī Bakr, Sālim b. 'Abd Allah b. 'Umar, Mujaḥid, 'Ikrima, 'Aṭā', Ṭāwūs, Makhūl, al-Sha'bī, al-Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, Ibn Sīrīn, 'Abd Allah b. Ibn Kathīr, Ibn Shihāb al-Zuhrī al-Zuhrī. See: al-Mubārak b. Muḥammad Ibn al-Athīr al-Jazarī, *Jāmi' al-Uṣūl fī Aḥādīth al-Rasūl* [Collector of Assets in the Ḥadīths of the Prophet] (Damascus: Maktabat al-Ḥalwānī, 1969-72), no. 8881; Baṣṭāmī, *Maḥmūm Tajdīd al-Dīn*, 45.

on the one side there were earlier converts and on the other, there were later converts slowly coming into authority. Both groups fought wars for long years known as *fitan* battles.

Ibn ‘Umar was a senior companion then and belonged to the religious segment of society. His role during the *fitan* battles had remained very constructive (see chapter three-five). He not only kept soliciting those in authority to establish the standard caliphate through various peaceful means, but also kept criticizing those who had turned to violence in the name of religion. Till his call influenced both those in the Umayyad administration and the people opposing them.

Ibn ‘Umar had deeply grasped the philosophy behind Hudaibiyah treaty. One feels by following the modus operandi of Ibn ‘Umar that he was the first personality who had comprehended the significance of the policy of compliance in Hudaibiyah pact. He mentioned the same in presence of two warring groups on the occasion of *hajj*. Ibn ‘Umar upheld that the Prophet achieved for Islam by the status quo of Hudaibiyah that could not have been achieved through battles. He seems to have thought that the same may be accomplished by a status quo in the then prevalent *fitan* battles that could not have been gained through armed conflicts.

Much discussion has already passed in subchapter 6.1 on the personalities of both sides. Among the professed *mujaddids* of the 1st/7th century ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz from the ruling Umayyads and Sālim, Mujāhid, Sha‘bī, al-Zuhrī, Ṭawūs, Ḥasan al-Baṣrī, etc. from the religious segments are good examples of Ibn ‘Umar’s influence. His stance became a standard for the religious group during the *fitan* period which has been summed up by Sufiyān al-Thawrī, ‘In the time of unity, we take the word of ‘Umar while in the time of division we follow the word of his son, Ibn ‘Umar’.⁹⁶⁰

If the list of *mujaddids* (renewalists), as compiled by various scholars,⁹⁶¹ is reviewed, then ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz appears to be seated topmost for many. He may not be the most knowledgeable and most pious of all the claimed fourteen *mujaddid* personalities, but his special status (of a governor and a caliph) helped him make a team of these scholars (like Sālim, ‘Aṭā’, al-Zuhrī, etc.) and provide them the opportunity to carry out *tajdīd* (revival) activities on a larger scale. Another reason might be that he tried to revert monarchy to the caliphate. Apart from making Ibn ‘Umar his role model, those people with whom he collaborated for this shift,

⁹⁶⁰ Abū Bakr Al-Khallāl, *Al-Sunnah*, 138.

⁹⁶¹ al-Suyūṭī, *al-Tanbi‘ah*, 15.

many of them had accepted Ibn 'Umar's influence and were considered *mujaddids* as mentioned earlier (see chapter 6.1).

Based on the opinion of many *mujaddids* at once, I argue what Ibn 'Umar had started as a peaceful solicitation and had rendered training to people, it later materialized into a major causeway for turning monarchy to caliphate in the next generation. Thus, if 'Umar b. 'Abd al-'Azīz or other *mujaddids* of the 1st/7th century were the culminating point for some revival (*tajdīd*) then Ibn 'Umar may be reckoned as its starting point.

Conclusion and Suggestions

Fitan in this study means the early Muslim civil wars that took place between 34/655 and 73/692, while ‘Abd Allāh b. ‘Umar is a famous companion of the Prophet and son of the second Muslim Caliph ‘Umar. This thesis has examined the stance of Ibn ‘Umar in the *fitan* wars and its influence upon the coming generations. It has also explored the nature of his status during this period.

Fitan is one of the most rigorously discussed subjects from diverse perspectives by many scholars. Therein the mention of Ibn ‘Umar appears frequently in passing here and there. As I have argued in subchapter 1.5 that the literature on the subject is conflicting in nature: some present him confused and regretting his non-participation in *fitan* wars while others praise his stance of being peaceful, represent him as an expert of *fitan* and encourage others to follow him. But apart from this thesis there is no single research which studies *fitan* and Ibn ‘Umar comparatively and extensively in such a way that Ibn ‘Umar’s position upon each *fitan* incident may be known.

This is the hardest part of this research as it required to glean together the data scattered across more than three hundred Arabic, English and Urdu resources, many of which were as bulky as to have ten-volumes or more. Also, the mainstream scholars are very dogmatic and sensitive in their description or analysis of these *fitan* periods. Moreover, Ibn ‘Umar was a great scholar of different Islamic disciplines and had hundreds of students. Its drawback was that his distinctly personal opinions on *fitan*-related issues turned hazy in various books on Islamic disciplines. This complex and complicated undertaking required a strong methodology. In this thesis a conscious effort has been made to choose a midway approach between diachronic (historical) and synchronic (textual): the earlier was used to ensure the authenticity of content whereas the latter for comprehensive analysis of the texts related to Ibn ‘Umar (employing content and discourse analysis). This mix method was employed to comprehend how Ibn ‘Umar approached the conflict, his peace building/non-violent measures, peaceful coexistence, socio-religious harmony, and political stability. The aim of this research ‘whether Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on *fitan* was *tajdīdic* (renewalist) or not?’ is fulfilled through a good scheme of chapters that logically correspond to the research questions.

Chapter two examines Ibn ‘Umar’s early life in pre-*fitan* period. But this examination is contrasted to earlier studies related to Ibn ‘Umar. This chapter has probed into the influence of his nature and nurture in the formation of his stance in the *fitan* times. It is contended that Ibn ‘Umar holds vital importance after the senior most companions like the Rightly Guided Caliphs

and their peers. As is examined in chapter two, although he is junior to them, he, in some way, is part of most of their experiences in Meccan and early Medinan life. His life has been studied through the stages of his observation, education, and supervised training. As is argued in subchapter 2.6, his keen observation comes up when he reflects on religious persecution in Mecca, migration, tough life in Medina, the military expeditions, Ḥudaybiya treaty, the conquest of Mecca, etc. His education and supervised training at the hands of the Prophet and senior companions inculcated in him both intellectual and moral virtues. Besides, his self-control, sincerity, and strong conviction elevated his bond with Islam and the Prophet to the level of devotion.

One of the key findings of chapter two is that Ibn ‘Umar’s personality, his education and mentorship, and witnessing critical moments in early Islamic history played a key role in the making of his viewpoint on *fitan* and his unique way of handling it. Re-reading him through these preliminary stages, we foresee the early development of his later role in *fitan*, e.g., his balance between resistance and unity in Jadhīma and *ridda* wars and also his inspiration from Ḥudaybiya provide some glimpses, as is discussed in great detail in chapter two.

Fitan is not the name of a single incident but a long period that spanned across the reigns of almost eight caliphs. It signifies a perpetual fluid situation in matters related to the caliphate. Many incidents took place during this period: from stable to a declining caliphate; caliphate without a caliph; the selection of caliph: on the basis of council (*shūrā*), power or hereditary; religious or political grounds for rebellion and subsequent armed conflicts; existence of two rival caliphs; the stepping down of one caliph in favor of another; from caliphate to monarchy and the like. In other words, a probe on Ibn ‘Umar’s take on *fitan* means his stance upon all these major incidents. Therefore, to investigate Ibn ‘Umar’s position, three chapters (three-five) dealt with a comparative study of *fitan* incidents and Ibn ‘Umar’s life starting from ‘Uthmān’s era till Ibn ‘Umar’s death (23/644) in the reign of ‘Abd al-Malik (73/693). Chapters two-five addressed convincingly the first research question of this study.

Previous studies regarding Ibn ‘Umar have generally focused on his intellectual aspects. This study reveals that his status in society was not of a mere religious scholar whose replies to queries related to *fitan* were penned down. On the contrary, his thoughts were the result of his highly active participation in social, religious, military, and diplomatic activities. Solid foundation, discussed in chapter two, shows its impact in different aspects of his life and his theo-political thought is one of them. Ibn ‘Umar held it a religious obligation that a Muslim society may live a disciplined life under a central government based on public consent. As we

argued in different contexts, he is adamant on both ‘public consent of a caliph and loyal submission of the public to the caliph’ and considered them a religious duty. In addition, he believed that the rights and responsibilities of the caliphate are both administrative and religious in nature and the caliph should be a pious Muslim who acts upon in accordance with Islamic principles and values. As is observed in the reigns of ‘Uthman and ‘Alī, Ibn ‘Umar viewed stability of a caliphate in a steady council i.e., a powerful council gives birth to a strong caliphate. As it is shown in chapters three-five, constant dialogue, constructive criticism, and advice are the main strength of Ibn ‘Umar. Therefore, he actively took part in every peaceful dialogue process but not in any armed conflict whatsoever. Likewise, he did not abandon constructive criticism in his private meetings with the influential personalities and advice in public gatherings with the commoners.

As we argued that there is no doubt that Ibn ‘Umar too draws his ideas from the Qur’ān, *ḥadīths* and Islamic history in pre-*fitan* times which makes him similar to other senior companions. But, according to our research, what makes him different in contrast to others, is that he was insistent in finding peaceful solution for Muslim leadership in various *fitan* period.

He is not only insistent but also consistent in resisting against armed conflict among Muslims whatsoever. Ibn ‘Umar was a character to give up everything for social reconciliation and peace. He firmly believed that Islam could flourish in a peaceful society. As is argued in chapter four under his *ḥasan* and *aḥsan* formula, when Ibn ‘Umar saw that strict adherence to ideal political principles will lead to violence and insecurity; he preferred to keep the peace as a better option. On the same grounds, he considered political stability better than lawlessness and chaos no matter whether it came as a result of un-Islamic way (power or inheritance). He did not permit anyone to rebel and spoil peace no matter how superior he might be from the then caliph. Such a transfer of power should take place only when performed with full preparation and not at the cost of killings or massacre. As argued profoundly in chapters four-five, if the claimers of the caliphate did not accede to *shūrā* and public consent and kept fighting, Ibn ‘Umar would not take allegiance till the matter resolved in favor of any one of them. As we discussed in the thesis, Ibn ‘Umar both reveals his opposition to the warring parties in this way and also shows his followers how to behave in such chaos situations.

As we discussed in detail in our research there are certain events during the time of the Prophet that play significant role in shaping Ibn ‘Umar’s future perspective such as witnessing religious persecution in Mecca, his stay at *Ṣuffa*, and participation in Hudaibiya. As dealt in chapters two and five that witnessing religious persecution in Mecca enabled Ibn ‘Umar to distinguish

between *jihād* and the political wars. Therefore, he effectively framed a strong narrative against those misusing and misinterpreting religious terms, causing religious extremism and violence. *Ṣuffa* played a significant role in molding Ibn ‘Umar. Here, he became an *’ākhira* centric (other worldly) person who strives for saving the faith and lives of the people rather than gaining political position. Another thing he learnt here, is his strict obedience to the prophetic practices. Ḥudaybiya too has special place in the heart of Ibn ‘Umar and a close resemblance with his way of dealing with *fitan*.

One of the important findings of this study is that the negative portrayal of Ibn ‘Umar in the sources on *fitan* has been made considering those opinions held by the supporters of the participants in *fitan* wars. As examined in chapters three-five, each group saw Ibn ‘Umar in light of its own views. To the ‘Alīd's, he was in doubt, unresolved, neutral, to the Zubayrites, he was cooperating with the Syrian administration, while to the Umayyads he was weak, old and incompetent for the caliphate. In fact, he was not in the good book of any. As is examined in chapter six, despite appearing alone among these conflicting views, Ibn ‘Umar was representing about 99% of the Companions who did not participate in civil wars.

The sources contained approval of Ibn ‘Umar's position in *fitan* period but are unable to give a complete picture. Since majority of those influenced by Ibn ‘Umar were scholars, they abstained from explicitly discussing the *fitan*. Consequently, their praise of Ibn ‘Umar's position remained vague and needed an analysis. Therefore, the role of Ibn ‘Umar remained separated from its influence. The same has been discussed in chapter six to fill this gap and also address second research question.

One of the important findings of chapter six is Ibn ‘Umar's long term influence on the following generations: *ṣaḥāba*, *tābi‘ūn* and *tābi‘ al-tābi‘īn*. As I argued in subchapter 6.1, he steadily worked very hard. Since Ibn ‘Umar's position on *fitan* was scholarly in nature, he had begun influencing key personalities of society during his lifetime. The number of these personalities from all walks (caliphs, dignitaries, jurists, mystics, traditionists, scholars, and reformers) kept on increasing in the coming generations. These same individuals later become leaders of Muslim communities in post-Ibn ‘Umar period. Among them were the founders of different schools of thoughts. One of the key findings observed after a comparison between *Ahl al-Sunnah* and Ibn ‘Umar's stance on *fitan* that Ibn ‘Umar was among the leading figures who sowed seeds of *Ahl al-Sunnah* on the issue of *fitan*.

Chapter seven addresses the third and also the main question of our research. Chapter two presents Ibn ‘Umar’s intimate connection with the Prophet and chapters three-five offer unique instances of his faithful following of the Prophet. This chapter (chapter seven) depicts Ibn ‘Umar’s conscious endeavors to imbibe the leadership style of the Prophet as much as his indigenous circumstances permit him.

Previous studies mention Ibn ‘Umar’s love for the Prophet and that he followed the Prophet in both religious and non-religious affairs. This study expands knowledge by exploring the same issue in different contexts where he is found to have attached his heart and mind to the Prophet in such a way that he would always remember the conduct of the Prophet in similar situations. The same has been described as prophetic leadership in this chapter. One of the important findings of this research is that Ibn ‘Umar saw in Ḥudaybiya the solution to the civil wars (*fitan*). It is another example how he internalized the prophetic way of life. As discussed in this chapter, he was not a blind follower but a deep thinker and learnt how to apply same approaches to different situations.

As is discussed in chapter seven, Ibn ‘Umar understood that despite of being in the right and displeasing the companions, an apparently submissive strategy of the Prophet in Ḥudaybiya had enabled him to win what could not be won by war. In the same fashion, Ibn ‘Umar criticized harshly upon his fellow religious segment, braced their unhappiness, and stopped them from an armed conflict. His strategy reaped those advantages that the *fitan* battles, despite of countless sacrifices, could not attain. A religious transformation appeared within the Umayyad caliphs that reached its peak in the reign of ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz wherein the style of government reverted to the Prophet’s and Rashidun Caliphs’ ways - which the scholars deem as *tajdīd* (renewal). Few among the Muslim academia hold ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz as *mujaddid* alone whereas few others deem fourteen personalities from all walks of life as *mujaddid* on account of their contribution to this revival.

As examined in chapter seven, if Ibn ‘Umar’s efforts are viewed from the revivalist perspective, then the scale of Ibn ‘Umar’s influence on this transformation (*tajdīd*) may be understood from the fact that more than half of these fourteen personalities including ‘Umar b. ‘Abd al-‘Azīz were influenced by him and his stance on *fitan*. If these personalities mark the apex of any revival, then Ibn ‘Umar was surely its starting point.

After this research on Ibn ‘Umar’s stance on *fitan* and its impact, I realize that both Ibn ‘Umar and *fitan* are vast fields and I cannot claim to have exhausted all the topics about them after a

very tiring study. Both have been investigated from multiple aspects earlier and further research is possible in these rich areas of study. For example, the mystical aspect of Ibn 'Umar's character or his theo-political thought may possibly be researched in the area of politics. The influence of Ibn 'Umar's peace-abiding thoughts have come under review in this dissertation ranging from early companions to the followers of the successors and later upon *Ahl al-Sunnah*. However, I have mentioned only the prominent personalities and key resources as specimen for the sake of brevity and indicated in my research that his overall influence was far more and thus is worthy of research and further investigation.

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