

Education as a Catalyst of Personality Development: A Case Study of ‘Omar bin Khattāb (R.A)

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Abstract

The individual's personality, character, thinking, skills and habits depends upon education. Education helps in the growth and boost the qualities of an individual such as physical, mental and emotional make-up as well as temperament and character. This paper enlightens the significant role of education in developing and mounting the personality of ‘Omar Ibn al-Khattāb (R.A). He was one of the most powerful and influential Muslim caliphs. His vibrant ideology of superiority of principles and laws made him eminent among his acquaintances. He was a man of determination and a mission, therefore, he thought, evaluated and acted according to it. He established a system of justice, morality, education and training. He was born as an ordinary ‘Omar but education and guidance of Islam made him “‘Omar The Great”. This paper ends with the note that a balanced, successful and well-adjusted personality can be designed only by educating the individuals. Educational institutions, religious organizations and enrich culture play an important role in shaping the sturdy personality as is evident in case of ‘Omar(R.A).

Keyword: education, personality, ‘omar, character, justice, morality, training

Introduction

Education is a technique of learning and acquiring information. It affects the mind, personality and physical skills of humans. It is also a way to become a civilized human being by maximizing ones potentials. Education can transmit culture and cultural heritage, because the primary task of man is to transmit understanding, abilities and attitude from one generation to next.

Contemporary psychology describes learning as the process that results in a fairly permanent change in conduct or prospective behavior.¹ Islamic overview of the notion of knowledge is split into two sources: From God directly and through human experience. The sources of God can be Revelation, inspiration, and real dream. Human experiences can be in a form of conditioned, observed, and cognized.²

Regardless of learning sources, Muslims believe that Allah is the ultimate cause of their change in understanding or conduct. He is the One Who teaches us what we do not understand.

عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ³

"Taught man what he knew not."

And He is the One Who teaches us the Quran and ability to speak.

عَلَّمَ الْقُرْآنَ⁴

"Taught the Quran"

عَلَّمَهُ الْبَيَانَ⁵

"Taught him the mode of expression"

Inborn personality attributes of man are shaped, molded and polished by knowledge and he become an Ideal figure. In history, we find 'Omar (R.A) as an exemplary character whose personality is structured and refined by the Prophet (S.A.W). His personality characteristics were complete in all aspects and he remained an outstanding identity till today.

'Omar bin Khattāb (R.A) belonged to Quraish tribe, *Bani 'Adi*. He was born 40 years before the flight of Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) in Makkah.⁶ At the time, Prophet (S.A.W) proclaimed Prophethood, he was of 27 years. His *kunyah* was *Farwq*. He was famous in lineage as an Orator, Wrestler and a Shooter.⁷

He was very sincere and strong in his decision. Prophet (S.A.W) said;

لَوْ كَانَ بَعْدِي نَبِيٌّ لَكَانَ عَمْرٌ⁸

"If there would be any Prophet after me, he would be 'Omar bin Khattāb"

'Omar bin Khattāb (R.A) had a strong personality. He fought bravely

in all *ghazwāt* and stand by Muhammad (S.A.W). He contributed intellectually and sincerely as a minister to Muhammad (S.A.W) in all peaceful pacts and *ghazwāt*. He became caliph in 13 *Hijrah* and remained a caliph for 10 years. During these years the earth was flourished with justice, trustworthiness and truthiness prevailed. His nation filled with piety and truth. Wherever he went, victory was his. His personality was very robust even a brave person of his time was afraid of him but his great personality brought no change in his character and ethics. Strong traits of his personality become stronger after faith in Allah and Muhammad (S.A.W).⁹ ‘Omar (R.A) acquired the virtues of self-respect, broad mindedness, experience and tact.

The Role of education in development of Personality:

Education is just a tool that sharpens and chisels knowledge with the theories and concepts that are already written and innovated by our ancestors. Education has various effects on human personality, shape his character and behavior. It helps human being to find out flaws in blind beliefs, brings changes in qualities and behavior. Man learns even a tiny thing in his everyday activities which can lead to new discoveries and inventions.

Well educated people seem more confident and self-composed than uneducated ones. Development of personality is not just one thing, but it is a cluster of many things. Developing personality is knowing what we are. It encompasses all the characteristics one have; strengths and weakness. It is not sufficient to know them only, one have to acknowledge them. Development of personality is self-confidence and positivity.

Following are the several contours which education puts on personality of ‘Omar (R.A); Lofty personality, robust constitution, high intellectual strength, well-founded integrity, powerful sense of justice, simple habits, disgust luxury, powerful belief in his mission, strong belief in truth, a strong sense of duty, full impartiality, devotion and dedication to Islam, extreme sense of dedication, compassion for the afflicted, courage against the oppressor, power, piety, humility, discipline, frugality, morality, political insight, accessibility, vigilance, patience, perseverance, legal accountability, equality to all, and indeed all, the virtues of a ruler or a leader of men should have.

True greatness of ‘Omar (R.A) personality exist in his character which is complete in relation to life. William Muir, an orientalist, commented on ‘Omar’s personality in his book “*The Caliphate: Its Rise, Decline and Fall*”;

“It takes only few lines to sketch ‘Omar’s life. Simplicity and responsibility were guiding principles of his administration, impartiality and dedication. His sense of justice was strong. He

*captains and governors were unfavorably chosen."*¹⁰

This is how the western scholars applauded the eminence of 'Omar (R.A)'s personality.

Following are certain aspects of personality which education develops and enhances;

Education as a Source of Wisdom:

Education is a magical personality booster and increases our intellectual development. Without knowledge one is fool. Education keeps one mind in right direction. It gives a motive to life which directs the way to be adopted and what will be its consequences. It is reflected in one's personality.

In Makkah, 'Omar (R.A) was among the ones who were able to read and write, showing his keen interest to learn from his childhood. He tried to be one of those who learned and educated himself, thus occupied a high position in time of Prophethood because of several qualities, including the ability to read and write, which meant a lot at that time.

'Omar (R.A) learnt from Muhammad (S.A.W), he trained him and formed his personality. Whole life of 'Omar (R.A) and his administration is completely illustrating his strong personality traits. His prudence was due to his outstanding characteristic of problem solving skills and understanding of the Arabs' history. Abdullah (R.A) said:

*"لو أن علم عمر وضع في كفة ميزان، ووضع علم أحياء الأرض في كفة، لرجح علم عمر بعلمه"*¹¹

"If 'Omar's knowledge was put on one side of scale, and the knowledge of the people on the other side of the scale, 'Omar's knowledge would weigh more."

The ayat which 'Omar (R.A) directly heard from the Prophet (S.A.W) played its significant role in the development of his personality. He purified and influenced his heart and soul, and he became a new man with new values, emotions, conduct, goals, and ambitions.

Through Quran, 'Omar (R.A) founded who is God, Who must be revered. Prophet (S.A.W) immersed in his heart the meaning of ayat.

'Omar (R.A) was the most courageous and bravest man among his Sahabah. He would often ask Prophet (S.A.W) regarding his decisions unless he understood. With full sincerity and clarity, he offers ijtiḥad. Because of his profound understanding of goals of Quran, ayat of Quran were revealed that in some instances coincided with his opinion.

"قال عمر وافقت الله في ثلاث . أو وافقني ربي في ثلاث. قلت يا رسول الله. لو اتخذت مقام

ابراهيم مصلى و قلت يا رسول الله يدخل عليك البر و الفاجر. فلو أمرت أمهات المؤمنين بالحجاب فأنزل الله آية الحجاب قال و بلغني معاتبة النبي بعض نساءه. فدخلت عليهن قلت إن انتهين أو ليبدلن الله رسوله خيرا منكن. حتى أتيت إحدى نساءه. قالت يا عمر! أما في رسول الله ما يعظ نساءه حتى تعظهن أنت، فأنزل الآية: (عسى ربه إن طلقك أن يبدله أزواجا خيرا منكن مُسلمات)¹²

“Omar (R.A) said that in three matters his pinion coincides with that of Allah. I said; O Messenger of Allah! (S.A.W) why don't you take Maqam-e-Ibrahim as a place of Prayer? Then Allah revealed the ayah. And I asked O Messenger of Allah! (S.A.W) both upright and evil person come to you, why don't you ask The Mothers of the believers to observe hijab? And the ayat of hijab was revealed. And I got to know that Prophet (S.A.W) reprimanded some of his wives I went to them and said; either you stop or Allah may give wives better than you to His Messenger. One of wives of Prophet (S.A.W) said, O! ‘Omar do you not believe that Allah's Messenger can exhort his wives? Why do you speak to them? Then Allah revealed the ayah 66:5”

Whenever ‘Omar (R.A) built his opinion on basis of his strong intellect and insight, Allah revealed ayat related to the concerned matter. Imam Suyuti in his book *“Tarikh Al-Khulafa”* has specified a chapter on ‘Omar (R.A) under which he has mentioned 20 such ayat.¹³ However, Shah Wali Ullah in *“Izala-tul-Khafa’ ‘an Khilafatil-Khulfa”* mentioned that in Quran there are 17 ayat which are revealed in reference of ‘Omar (R.A)’s thoughts.¹⁴

‘Omar (R.A) had great knowledge of Islam. Prophet (S.A.W) saw a dream and elaborated;

“أريت كأنى أنزع بدلو بكرة على قلب فجاء أبو بكر فنزع ذنوبا أو ذنوبين فنزع نزعاً ضعيفا و الله تبارك و تعالى يغفر له ثم جاء عمر فاستقى فاسحات غربا فلم أر عبقرى من الناس فرية حتى روي الناس و ضربوا العطن”¹⁵

“During sleep, I saw myself taking out water from a well with a bucket, Abu Bakr came and he, weakly, took out a bucket or two. Allah may forgive him. Then, ‘Omar came and the bucket in his hands became very large. I never saw anyone so powerful; all the individuals drank their fill and watered their camels kneeling down there.”

Quran’s compilation, itself, is a strong argument of ‘Omar (R.A) in-depth knowledge. According to authentic Hadith literature, ‘Omar (R.A) feared that the next generation may not have enough teachers of the Quran. He, therefore, approached Abu Bakr (R.A), and proposed that a formal

compilation of the Quran should be prepared on materials suitable for storing, maintaining, and using as a reference.¹⁶

‘Omar (R.A) possessed both the education and sound wisdom which helped him to use intelligently the skills engendered by him to develop himself and the environment. Thus, education changed his perspective of looking to life and potentially solves his life problems.

Education Teaches Uprightness/ Ethics/Values:

A good behavior towards other is always appreciated, admired and is considered indispensable to live a good and pleasant life. Education teaches what to speak and how to talk. Through education one can differentiate between right and wrong.

‘Omar (R.A) had a clear idea of superiority of principles and truth. He was a true and just leader and showed respect to all, regardless of their faith.

Muhammad Yousaf Jamil in his article on “Islamic perspective on A leadership” identifies that leader ought to be truthful; his communications and demands should not be unpredictable and outside the realities of life. He must think through the state of affairs adjoining him and his communal as they essentially are.¹⁷

When ‘Omar (R.A) became caliph, he took care of the females, He said;

“By Allah, if I live longer I will not leave any widow of the people of Iraq in need of anybody else, after this year.”¹⁸

‘Omar (R.A) strictly followed the precept of equality and would not tolerate any form of difference. His example of justice captured hearts and minds. He ruled in favor of a Jewish man, in fact, Jew was a *Kafir* and it could not make ‘Omar (R.A) unfair to him or take partial decision. Imam Malik narrated from Saeed ibn al-Musayyib that a Muslim and a Jew refereed their disagreement to ‘Omar (R.A). ‘Omar (R.A) saw Jew as the right one and ruled in his favour. The Jew said to him “By Allah! You governed the truth.”¹⁹

In addition, he always fought for individual freedom and for their respect. He stated very clearly that every individual is born free and no one should have to exploit other.

‘Omar (R.A) said in his first speech after becoming caliph;

“No one will be allowed to oppress or to transgress other’s right, but I will place my cheek on the ground...”²⁰

In fact, ‘Omar (R.A) had taken great care of the poor and privileged people. He had a simple hut of mud without doors where he lived, to be near to them and went through the streets every night, consulting the poor.

‘Omar bin al-Khattab (R.A) was an unbiased and just leader. He believed that people ought to by no means lose their freedom and self-respect. Under his leadership, Islam unfolds extensively not by the sword but by virtue of its simplicity, beauty, openness and the leadership provided by him. He thought that every person is born free and nobody should have to humiliate himself in front of others. As a result, non-Muslims were free to exert their religious rituals and ceremonies during his period.

Uprightness is firmly connected to virtues of responsibility, trust and credibility. It should always be transparent, and respectful of the rights and privacy of others in society. Omar (R.A) took responsibility of various moral and ethical issues in society and build a strong character.

Education Build and Boosts Confidence:

Education helps to develop an individual’s characteristics such as his physical, mental and emotional opus as well as his personality temperament i.e Confidence, which is necessary for growth of personality. Education is only a booster in phase of low confidence. Education provides the opportunity to sit with other people, speak to them, and make friends. Learn fresh things and clear doubts.

‘Omar (R.A) had great confidence in his capabilities. He has strong intellectual and decision power. He has taken many steps which showed his confidence in himself.

‘Omar’s (R.A) actions and legacy speak about his leadership and his numerous achievements are reflection of his life as a successful confident leader. He had many achievements in the Islamic actions and Social mandates. It was ‘Omar (R.A) who started the project of writing down the Quran because in battle of *Muwatah*, after Muhammad (S.A.W)’s death, many *hufaz* were martyred. It was feared that Quran may be lost. To save Quran from being lost or have any corruption in its original text, a standard and approved copy of Quran was prepared and kept with one trustworthy person. ‘Omar (R.A) also invented the *Hijri* Calendar, the calendar that Muslims use until today and help them to keep track of the Islamic holy days and events.

Other steps or initiatives taken by him show his confidence in his decisions as he always looked for long term result or effectiveness of his judgments. Some of the events of his life show the well-grounded outcome of his decisions. Saeed ibn al-Musayyib (R.A) said:

*“Calendar was established by ‘Omar bin khattab (R.A) for the first time. In consultation with Ali ibn abi Talib, he reached at a decision.”*²¹

Abu Az-Zanad said;

“‘Omar (R.A) referred to others about the Calender, and they agreed upon hijrah.” ²²

‘Omar (R.A) known in the Islamic history as the Caliph who eliminate and minimize slavery. He set very harsh rules to it, in the top of them was that “No Arab could be a slave” and that happened in era where the world economy was based on slavery.

‘Omar (R.A) had great influence on schools of thought like school of Makkah, Madinah, Basra, Koofa, Syria and Egypt. In particular, ‘Omar (R.A) was concerned with preparing specialized scholars whom he sent to different areas. He ordered commanders and governors to build *masajid* in the conquered lands that would be the *Dawah*’s centers and teach & spread civilization of Islam.

Education breeds ‘Omar’s confidence and hope, which in turn helps him to truly embrace the struggle. His confidence was like the magnet that attracts success and kept him focused even when things become a little challenging for him.

Education Gives Opportunities and Experience:

Opportunities can be seen as a way of demonstrating personality. One’s personality has to do nothing if one sit idle. Opportunities and experiences are inter-related. Opportunities gives experience and experience gives more opportunities.

‘Omar (R.A) took advantage of his experience and opportunities and established the public treasury that allowed him to set salaries for all employees including him and the army. He also established Land Revenue Department. Dr Muḥammad Aṣ-Ṣallābī mentioned ‘Omar (R.A) was politically genius so he had remarkable organization of his military and army. For the first time in the Islamic world, ‘Omar (R.A) established an effective judicial system and built a Police Department as a result he became first historical ruler who separated executive from the judiciary.²³

Imam Nawawi mentioned in his *Tahdhib* that ‘Omar (R.A) was the first individual to establish the provinces of Koofa, Basra and of Mesopotamia, Syria, Cairo and Mosul. He was the first person who appointed *Qadis* in the provinces. ²⁴

Among ‘Omar (R.A) remarkable accomplishments are; establishment of a store for storage of flour, raisins, dates as well as numerous arrangements for guests/ visitors or those who lost their way. He also established scheme for administering market transactions and for measuring procedure of products, and not leaving any opportunity to manipulate the requirements of

people.²⁵

Commander of the Faithful provide grant to orphan, who was brought to him, a hundred Dirhams as well as monthly subsistence to his custodian to help him. Then, his sustenance would increase every year. ‘Omar (R.A) also ordered that orphans be cared for and that the treasury will pay all nursing dues of his brought up.²⁶

‘Omar (R.A) lived in conformity with the Allah’s legislation, therefore he did not approve any deviant conduct that would adversely affect Muslim society.

‘Omar (R.A) introduced many administrative innovations, successfully. He introduces *Bai-tul-Mal*, from which public welfare funds, scholarships for the needy, and government wages were paid. He set up judicial courts and learning centers. His fear of corruption and misappropriation caused him to open a public department to handle complaints against representatives of government. In Islamic territory, he was the first to introduce property tax (*Kharāj*). As the Islamic world’s boundaries continued to spread, he also tried to organize it more effectively. As such, the new empire was split into administrative divisions, based around cities. He also established new cities and encouraged the cultivation of barren land. This facilitated the reconstruction of societies beyond the major cities and improved the overall financial situation of the state.

Education opens the gateway to better opportunities in life and ‘Omar (R.A) gained great experience by exposing various setups. Today world recognizes the worth of his work.

Education Teaches Simplicity:

Simplicity is the state of being simple and uncompound. It is a quality of extraordinary people. It is a wonderful virtue and not common as it should be. It is one of those attributes that improves all the other attributes of personality. Education teaches how to live a successful life neither by innovation nor by technology but with the combination of simplicity and diligence.

‘Omar (R.A) lived in a simple mud hut without door and walked the streets every evening, consulting with the poor. Moreover, his food was very simple, consisted of bread and olive oil, rarely would he eat anything else. His simplicity is always associated with humility and it implies magnanimity and maturity. Khuzaimah ibn Thabit (R.A) narrates:

“Whenever ‘Omar (R.A) appointed a governor, he would write to him and stipulate conditions for him, that he will not ride a Turkish

*horse (which was seen as an expensive horse), nor will he eat delicacies food, nor wear soft clothes, nor close his door to the needy, if he does it, then he will be punished."*²⁷

He was the living Quran, spent time with Prophet (S.A.W) and understood that this materialistic world is only a place of tests and trials. He was free from the glittering of this world and surrendered himself completely to his Lord, both externally and internally. He renounces the pleasures of worldly things.

Among his simple life, several experiences of 'Omar (R.A)'s life can be quoted as follows;

Imam Ahmed quoted;

*"When he was caliph, he gave a speech to the individuals while wearing an Izar (Waist Wrapper) on which there was twelve patches."*²⁸

Ibn Saad has also mentioned an aspect of his simplicity in "Tabaqat Ibn Saad"

*"...and he moved around the House of Allah wearing an Izar with twelve patches."*²⁹

Ones' on Friday, he got late for sermon, when he came out, he excused the people for wait. And said;

*"I was late because of my clothes; it was being washed and I had no other clothes."*³⁰

Abdullah Ibn Amir ibn Rabee'ah (R.A) said:

*"I went to hajj with 'Omar ibn al-Khattab from Madeena to Makkah and back again, and he had not setup tent from him. He shaded himself under a cloak or a mat on tree."*³¹

The example of Umar (R.A) in his abstention and simplicity is truly fascinating. Despite being the leader of the Muslims and having the riches of Arabia, Persia and Rome in the coffers of Madinah he led a very simple life in all aspects.

Education Makes a Person Disciplined:

Discipline differentiates between man and a wild. Disciplined person is praised and liked by everyone. Disciplined person have a high level of integrity and a proper plan of his activities.

'Omar (R.A) had a well-disciplined personality, high level of intelligence and have powerful analytical abilities which resulted in consistent and focused development policies. He was constantly guided and directed by Muhammad (S.A.W) to right path so that he could grow up socially, scientifically and morally educated person and he grew as such.

Mohammad Agha in book "*AI- Farouk Omar Ibn Al-Khattab The Second Caliph*" commented that 'Omar (R.A) was a man of right and might. He was able to discern the truth from falsehood. He always called spade a spade, and would never make things mince. Whatever he saw as the truth he spoke, although it might seem bitter. He disliked favouritism and bias. He was known to be hard and harsh, but it was because he always appreciated the reality, and he did not hesitate to express it, even if it might be displeasing or disappointing.³²

Imam Nawawi said that he was the first person to adopt the whip.³³ Ibn Saad (R.A) narrated that Ibn 'Omar (R.A) said;

*"'Omar (R.A), to forbid people from some wrong doing, come to his family and say; If I find out anyone involved in something that I have forbidden, I will double his punishment."*³⁴

'Omar (R.A) set very high integrity norms, and was the first to practice what he preached. His son 'Abdullah was a very skilled man but he refused to offer him any office. Abu Shama, one of his sons, was found guilty of drinking and 'Omar had flogged him to death. Once, a Governor gifted something to one of his wives. 'Omar gave the gift back and the Governor was rebuked. Once a wife of 'Omar sent some fragrance to wife of emperor of Byzantine as a gift. In return, the wife of the emperor of Byzantine sent some gift. 'Omar sold the presents to the treasury and credited the proceeds.³⁵

'Omar (R.A) had made unique efforts to project Islam as a living faith in the right view. There was a school of thought that considered religion to be mystical and supra-rational and as such the injunctions of religion, including Islam, should not be tested on the grounds of intellect or reason. 'Omar established what later came to be called *Israr Ilm-ud-din*. He held that Islam as a rational religion, with all its precepts and practices being tested and justified by reason and intellect.

He was the first Muslim to adopt *Ijtihad*, and lay down new legislations in accordance with Islam. In Quran, there is no penalty for drinking. 'Omar (R.A) imposed penalty of 80 lashes in this behalf.³⁶ *Mutah* stance was not evident. 'Omar (R.A) prohibited *Mutah*. The status of three divorces was not clear. 'Omar held three divorces announced at one sitting as irrevocable. 'Omar enjoined upon Muslims to offer *Tarawih* in congregation in Ramadan.³⁷

'Omar (R.A) would also frequently send scholars to the army, in order to teach Islam and guide soldiers according to the Prophetic method, before being dispatched. He often wrote his governors and judges how they formulate *Qiyas*, often write that this legal principle should be implemented

in cases where there is no precedent in Quran and Sunnah.

Caliph 'Omar (R.A) was also the first Muslim ruler to dig canals, particularly between the Tigris River and Basra city. These were intended to provide drinking and irrigation water to towns. The construction of bridges, roads and highways took place Under 'Omar (R.A) command.

Thus, 'Omar (R.A) showed strong confidence in his decisions and lead a disciplinary life by formulating principles of administration.

Education Ensures Fulfillment of Others Rights (Freedom of Expression):

Education is a powerful tool by which rights of others are safeguarded. Among the rights, freedom of expression was above all rights. And one of the basic rights, guaranteed by 'Omar (R.A) to his subjects, was their freedom of speech. In his first speech as Caliph, he emphasized the people's right to criticize him and unseat him, if necessary, if he deviates from the right discourse.

In fact, once a layman questioned him about a piece of cloth, he had used to stitch his clothes; the layman noticed that it was longer than other people's shares of cloth. Abdullah (R.A), 'Omar's (RA) son, then stood up and told the group that because 'Omar (R.A) was a tall person, he added his share to his father's, as he needed some additional cloth to make his dress.³⁸

The people of the book exercised their religious rituals and perform their acts of worship in their homes and in places of worship and nobody stopped them from it, because Islamic *shariah* provide the right of freedom of belief to them. At-Tabari has told about the treaty established by 'Omar (R.A) with the people of Acelia' (Jerusalem), in which he stated to give safety to the people of Acelia' and to protect their lives, wealth, crosses and churches. ³⁹

'Omar (R.A) was recognized as a tolerant leader to *ahl-dhimmah*; he would allow them not to pay *Jizyah* if they could not. Abu Ubayd, in *Kitab al-Amwal*, states that 'Omar (R.A) went through some people's door and saw an old blind man who was begging. He taped him on his shoulder and told him; "From which People of the book are you?" "A Jew" he said. "What made you do what I see?" 'Omar (R.A) asked. He told; I beg for payment of *Jizyah* and full fill the needs of old age. 'Omar (R.A) took him to his home by hand and provided him something from his home. Then he asked the caretaker of *Bayt-ul-Mal*; "See him and others like him, for we were not honest to him by Allah, if we took advantage of him when he was young and left him when he is old. And let the *Jizyah* pay off from him and others like him." ⁴⁰

At other moment, 'Omar (R.A) expressed his interest to fix the dower of women at the time of marriage. A lady responded by standing up and raising her voice against 'Omar's (R.A) view, reminding him that, Allah had

not fixed the dower and large amount can be given in dower. ‘Omar (R.A) recognized the view of the lady and thanked her that she had corrected him.⁴¹

‘Omar (R.A) was always in favor of individual liberty and self-respect. Once, son of Amr bin al-Aas (R.A) (Governor of Egypt), abused and beaten a Copt Christian; when ‘Omar ibn Al-Khattab (R.A) heard of this, he punished son of Amr (R.A) by the hand of Copt Christian. Then ‘Omar (R.A) spoke to father and son, both and remarked, since when have you made people slaves, when they are born free of their mothers? ⁴²

‘Omar (R.A) is renowned for his reforms in humanitarian matters. He gave privileges to slaves. He emancipated slave girls who bore kids to their masters. Dhimmis have been given full protection. They have been regarded equally with other people in terms of citizenship.

Education Teaches Equality:

Equality means to ensure that everyone has an equal opportunity to take full advantage of their life and skills. It is also believed that no one should have poorer chances of living because of their origin, their beliefs, or whether they have a disability.

The principle of equality was followed by ‘Omar (R.A) and he did not tolerate difference of any kind. Once, ‘Omar (R.A) differed from Ubayy bin Ka’b (R.A) on some issue. The case was brought to the court of Qazi Zaid bin Thabit (R.A). Zaid bin Thabit (R.A) left his seat, out of regard, for the caliph ‘Omar (R.A) when he arrived at the court. After observing the scenario, ‘Omar (R.A) reprimanded his bias against him and remarked that this was his first act of injustice and ‘Omar (R.A) sat down with petitioner.⁴³

There are several other incidents which show ‘Omar’s (R.A) strong suit of equality. When caliphate comes in hands of ‘Omar (R.A), he declared;

“I have the right to pay only for two clothes from the funds, one cloth in winter and another cloth in summer, and my household necessities, similar to the requirements of an ordinary man from Quraysh, who is not the richest of them. I am just a common Muslim.” ⁴⁴

‘Omar (R.A) was in favor of prompt and impartial justice. ‘Omar (R.A) designated those as Judges who were capable and upright persons. He instructed Judges in the following terms:

"Justice is a significant obligation. Treat people equally in your presence, company, and in decisions, to avoid bias to high placed individuals and a weak should not be desperate of justice. When you have a query and find nothing about it in the Quran or in the Sunnah of the Prophet (S.A.W), ponder over the question; over the precedents

*and analogous cases and then decide by analogy."*⁴⁵

'Omar (R.A) did not took anything during famine to show equality between the caliph and the nation. It is mentioned in Tarikh At-Tabari;

"During reign of 'Omar (R.A), a famine struck Madinah and its surroundings. As the wind blew, sand descended like ashes from the sky. Therefore, that year was known as 'Ām-ar-Ramādah. 'Omar (R.A) swore that he wouldn't take milk, yogurt and ghee, until all individuals become able to afford this stuff.⁴⁶ Then some ghee and yogurt become available in market and a slave brought them for 'Omar (R.A) for forty (Dirhams) and told: "O! Commander of the faithful, Allah fulfilled your oath and had given you boundless reward. Some yogurt and ghee was available in market and I brought that in forty dirhams for you. 'Omar (R.A) Replied; "You paid too much. Give them in charity, because I don't want to eat extravagantly." And 'Omar (R.A) said "If I don't suffer the suffering, how can I worry about people." ⁴⁷

'Omar (R.A) had clear knowledge and understanding of religion. Abdullah Ibn M as'ood (R.A) said:

"... It is believed that 'Omar (R.A) possessed nine tenths of knowledge."⁴⁸

'Omar (R.A) was a man of outstanding personality, both physically and intellectually. But he never tried to give the impression of being superior in any way to the people around him. He was a good critic, but his criticism was not directed at others; it was intended for himself too.

Education Teachs Self-Counter:

Actions speak louder than words, so was with 'Omar's (R.A). The practical steps taken by him make his character, his integrity and his love evident for the people in the Muslim state. At night, he took rounds to assess the condition of the people. His accomplishments reflect his life.

It is mentioned that 'Omar (R.A) used to put his hand close to the fire, and says;

"Ibn al-Khattab, Can you tolerate this?"⁴⁹

The goal of education is to awake and develop the physical, intellectual and moral potentials that are required by society as a whole and by the milieu of individual for which he is specially destined.

Conclusion

The key to 'Omar (R.A) personality is his belief in Allah and his measures for the last day. This faith is the reason for 'Omar bin Khattab's

notable personality. His strength didn’t challenge his impartiality. Thus, by understanding the meaning of *Tawḥid* as a certain faith, acceptance, submission, sincerity and love of Allah, he deserved the aid and support of Allah. He had a deep understanding of faith; nature and meaning of *Tawḥid*, and his profound faith was manifested in his existence. Abdullah bin Masud (R.A) narrated:

“The acceptance of Islam by ‘Omar (R.A)’s has been our victory, his migration to Medina has been our success, and his rule was a blessing from Allah. In Haram, we didn’t offer prayers until ‘Omar accepted Islam. When he embraced Islam, the Quraysh were forced to let us pray in the Mosque.”⁵⁰

Washington Irving in his book “Lives of Mahmet and his successors” said;

“‘Omar’s history demonstrated that he was a man of powerful mind, uncompromising integrity and firm justice. He was the founder of the Islamic empire; he confirmed and carried out Prophet (S.A.W)’s inspirations; helping Abu Bakr (R.A) in his short caliphate with his counsel. He followed the example of the Prophet (S.A.W) and Abu Bakr (R.A) in the simplicity of his habits, and his disdain for all splendors and luxury of this world. It was his strong belief in truth of this policy that causes him so severe in punishing all ostentatious style and luxurious indulgence in his officers.”⁵¹

‘Omar (R.A) was of amazing personality. He had a pious and just character, was one of the most significant political and religious actors of Islam. Under Umar ibn Al-Khattab’s governance Islam has spread extensively, not by the sword but through its beauty, simplicity, transparency, openness and the governance provided by him. He remains a model for power, justice, love and compassion even today.

In this challenging era, there is a need to promote such education which should bring positive change in the personality of each member of society by enhancing their inner capabilities. ‘Omar (R.A) was born physically strong but his personality was shaped by prophet Muḥammad (S.A.W) and he become the greatest admisinstrator, successful policy maker and unbeatenable victorious. Therefore, it is necessary to enforce such an educational system which helps to develop a strong personality with well endorsed traits based purely on Tawḥid.



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