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The Umayyads and Their Role in Public Life from the Beginning of the Islamic Call to the End of the Rashidun Caliphate (13 BH-40 AH / 610-661 CE)

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Abstract:

This article aims to highlight the roles and responsibilities assumed by the Umayyad branch at the emergence of Islam, after the establishment of the state of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and during the Rashidun Caliphate. It reviews the most important events that led Muawiya to the caliphate and to the establishment of the Umayyad state. It also presents the historical transformations and trajectories of the Umayyad branch before and after Islam, while emphasizing the principal roles played by this branch in early Islam up to its accession to the caliphate. The caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) is regarded as the pivotal event that strengthened the influence of Banu Umayya and their aspiration to the caliphate. His martyrdom was also an important and decisive event in their pursuit of, and accession to, the caliphate after the intense conflict between Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib and Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan (may Allah be pleased with them both).

Keywords: Umayyads; Islamic Call; Rashidun Caliphate; public life.

Introduction

The period that witnessed the emergence of Islam and the mission of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) brought several transformations and changes in religious, social, economic, and political life. The stages of the Prophet's call (peace and blessings be upon him) faced major difficulties and sharp religious and social polarization among the tribes and clans of Quraysh. Some followed the Islamic call and supported it enthusiastically, whereas others opposed and rejected it. As a result of this polarization, many leading men of Quraysh embraced Islam at the beginning of the call and played a pioneering historical role in supporting and defending Islam. By contrast, many leading men and chiefs of Quraysh confronted Islam with hostility, estrangement, war, plots against the Muslims, and persecution. The reactions of Quraysh and its clans to the Islamic call differed, including those of Banu Hashim, the clan to which the Prophet (peace be upon him) belonged: some believed in the call, while others opposed it. Among the most prominent clans of Quraysh was the Umayyad branch, whose leading men also adopted different positions toward the new religion. Their role was particularly prominent because of their kinship with Banu Hashim, their status within Quraysh, their large numbers, and their financial and political influence. The Umayyad house therefore played an important role at the beginning of the Islamic call and at the conquest of Mecca, and later after the spread of Islam and the establishment of the Islamic state during the Prophetic period and the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs, until this house gained control of the Islamic caliphate and confined it to the Umayyad family from Muawiya (may Allah be pleased with him) until the fall of the Umayyad state.

The Umayyads had been influential since the pre-Islamic period, and their importance increased during the formative period of Islam. This can be seen in their differing responses to the new faith and in their relationship with Banu Hashim. The two houses were related as cousins and were bound by kinship and tribal solidarity. At the same time, they had competed in the pre-Islamic period for leadership and influence within Quraysh. This rivalry later acquired a political and military dimension in early Islam, particularly in the struggle over the caliphate.

Because of these factors, and because the Umayyads reached the caliphate after bloody events, many historians, writers, and students of history questioned the role of Banu Umayya in the dawn and early period of Islam. They minimized their services and contributions to Islam. Some even accused them of having neither supported Islam nor professed it except in order to undermine it. They attributed to them every kind of defect and shortcoming. Some chroniclers claimed that they embraced Islam only under the gleam of the sword of Islam. They also used the Prophet's (peace and blessings be upon him) description of the converts at the conquest of Mecca as *al-tulaqa'* to launch a fierce campaign against the Umayyad family and its leading men, especially Muawiya (may Allah be pleased with him). Many historians even deny any positive role for them during the Prophetic period. They claim that the Umayyads climbed into different offices sometimes because of the inattention of the Rightly Guided Caliphs and at other times through their collusion, which later encouraged Umayyad aspirations to the caliphate. They further argue that the roles and responsibilities entrusted to them during the Rashidun period contributed to the problems, disputes, and civil strife that hastened the killing of Caliph Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) and the outbreak of the Great Fitna.

Against this background, the present study examines the role played by leading members of Banu Umayya from the beginning of the Islamic mission to the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate. The preceding considerations raise several central questions.

What was the role of Banu Umayya in early Islam? What was their position toward the Islamic call? What duties, tasks, and responsibilities did the Umayyads assume in the dawn of Islam during the Prophetic and Rashidun periods? Which offices did Banu Umayya hold during the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the Rightly Guided Caliphs? How did Banu Umayya advance through the different offices and responsibilities until they gained control of the caliphate and ruled the Islamic world for decades?

Before entering into the core of the subject, it is necessary to identify the genealogy of the Umayyads and the principal branches that constituted the Umayyad family, especially since some of these branches played a decisive role in placing the family on the throne of the caliphate. The relations among these branches should also be considered, since they contributed to the family's attainment of this prominence and later also contributed to the fall of the caliphate.

1. Genealogy of the Umayyads

The Umayyads trace their lineage to Umayya ibn Abd Shams ibn Abd Manaf. Banu Hashim and Banu Umayya meet in their common ancestor Abd Manaf. Amr ibn Abd Manaf, known as Hashim and regarded as the ancestor of the Hashimites, was the brother of Abd Shams, the ancestor of the Umayyads. He is said to have been his twin.¹ Both branches therefore descend from Abd Manaf ibn Qusayy, a leading figure and unifier of Quraysh.

Abd Manaf had four sons: Amr, known as Hashim; Nawfal; Abd Shams; and al-Muttalib. These brothers concluded *ilaf* agreements with political rulers in and around the Arabian Peninsula and with the Byzantine and Persian empires during the pre-Islamic period. They also concluded *ilaf* arrangements to facilitate the commercial activity of Quraysh.² In addition, they established security agreements with powerful Hijazi tribes such as Thaqif, Khuzaa, and Hawazin.³ These arrangements enhanced the standing of Banu Abd Manaf within Quraysh, whose economic life depended largely on trade. Abd Shams ibn Abd Manaf benefited particularly from the *ilaf*. He became a wealthy merchant and one of the notables of Quraysh. He led trade journeys to Abyssinia, which increased his influence and prestige, especially after the death of his brother Hashim. He rose to a leading position in the commercial life of Quraysh, and his sons and descendants inherited this role after his death.

Abd Shams had eight sons: Umayya al-Akbar, Umayya al-Asghar, Habib, Rabia, Abd Umayya, Nawfal, Abd al-Uzza, and Abd Allah al-Araj. He also had three daughters: Umayma, Saba, and Ruqayya.⁴ Most of these children had descendants. Banu Abd Shams therefore became a large and highly branched kin group, unlike Banu Hashim, who were fewer in number and had fewer branches than the Umayyads.

Umayya al-Akbar ibn Abd Shams ibn Abd Manaf was the eldest son of Abd Shams. The present study focuses on his descendants because the Umayyad family descended from his line. This house played a prominent role before and after the rise of Islam, particularly in economic, political, social, and military affairs, together with their cousins from Banu Abd Shams. In Arabic, the name Umayya is pronounced with a damma on the initial alif and a kasra on the mim. The name was widespread among Arab tribes in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods.

¹ Musab ibn Abd Allah al-Zubayri, *Nasab Quraysh*, ed. Levi-Provençal, 3rd ed., Dar al-Maarif, Cairo, 2010, vol. 1, p. 14.

² Jawad Ali, *Al-Mufasssal fi Tarikh al-Arab Qabl al-Islam*, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, 2016, vol. 7, p. 68.

³ Ihsan Sidqi al-Amad, *Al-Judhur al-Tarikhiyya lil-Usra al-Umawiyya*, Hawliyyat Kulliyat al-Adab, Kuwait University, 1996, p. 25.

⁴ Musab ibn Abd Allah al-Zubayri, previously cited, pp. 97-98.

Umayya al-Akbar ibn Abd Shams was one of the leading men of Quraysh. He was a wealthy merchant and was known for his generosity.¹ After his father's death, he was entrusted with the military leadership of Quraysh.² Like Abd Shams, he had many children. He had twelve sons: al-As, Abu al-As, al-Is, Abu al-Is, al-Uways, Abu Amr, Amr, Sufyan, Abu Sufyan, Harb, Abu Harb, and Anbasa, who is also said to have been Abu Sufyan.³ His household, children, and descendants were therefore numerous within Quraysh. Their commercial activity also increased their influence and gave them strong relations with other tribes and Quraysh clans. As a result, they became one of the strongest kin groups in Quraysh in terms of numbers and economic, military, and social influence. They also maintained close relations with other Quraysh clans, especially Banu Hashim.

2. Relations between the Umayyads and Banu Hashim in the Pre-Islamic Period

Banu Hashim were closely related to Banu Abd Shams and Banu Umayya. The Umayyads were numerous, and Harb ibn Umayya was among their leading figures. The two branches were connected through kinship, marriage, and tribal solidarity. These ties were visible when Umayyads supported Hashimites and vice versa. They also cooperated in seeking to take the responsibilities of providing water and food to pilgrims from Banu Abd al-Dar.⁴ Kinship and tribal solidarity continued to bring the two groups together in other situations. Al-Madaini relates that Hamza once heard a man from Banu Makhzum speak about women of Banu Abd Manaf and killed him. Hamza informed Abu Sufyan of what had happened. Abu Sufyan then approached Banu Makhzum and offered three blood payments for the slain man, but they refused. The next day they returned asking for the three payments. Abu Sufyan told them that the other party would not pay more than two. On the following day they asked for two payments, but he told them that only one would be paid. They again refused. When they returned the next day and accepted one payment, Abu Sufyan said: "The people have now refused the blood payment. This is a slain man for whom no compensation will be paid, and his people have forfeited their claim."⁵

Tribal solidarity united the clans and branches of Quraysh. For this reason, the Umayyads and Hashimites fought side by side in the Fijar War.⁶ Harb ibn Umayya ibn Abd Shams commanded Kinana and Quraysh in that conflict.⁷ Friendly relations also developed between leading men of the two branches. Harb ibn Umayya was a companion of Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim.⁸ Abu Sufyan was likewise a companion of al-Abbas ibn Abd al-Muttalib in the pre-Islamic period, and al-Abbas later played a role in his conversion to Islam.⁹ Musafir ibn Abi Amr was known among the young men of Quraysh for his beauty, generosity, and poetry, and he was a companion of Abu Talib ibn Abd al-Muttalib.¹⁰ Marital ties further connected the two branches. Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, known as Abu Lahab, married Umm Jamil bint Harb ibn Umayya, the sister of Abu Sufyan. The Quran describes her as "the carrier of firewood" because of the intense hostility that she and her husband showed toward the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the Muslims.¹¹ Kurayz ibn Rabia ibn Habib ibn Abd Shams married Umm Hakim, known as al-Bayda, the daughter of Abd al-Muttalib and the paternal aunt of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him). The Umayyads belonged to the wider Banu Abd Shams kin group. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) married his daughters Ruqayya and, after her, Umm Kulthum (may Allah be pleased with them both) to Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him).¹² He also married his daughter Zaynab to Abu al-As ibn al-Rabi ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd Shams, a relative of the Umayyads.¹³ The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself married Ramla bint

¹ Ihsan Sidqi al-Amad, previously cited, p. 45.

² Ibn Khallikan, *Wafayat al-Ayan*, Dar Sadir, Beirut, 2011, vol.

³ Ibn Hazm al-Andalusi, *Jamharat Ansab al-Arab*, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 2011, vol. 1, p. 78.

⁴ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, Dar Hajar, Egypt, 1997, vol. 2, p. 355.

⁵ Ihsan Sidqi al-Amad, previously cited, p. 44.

⁶ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 2, p. 353.

⁷ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 353.

⁸ Muhammad ibn Sad, *Al-Tabaqat al-Kubra*, ed. Muhammad Abd al-Qadir Ata, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1st ed., 1990, vol. 1, p. 71.

⁹ Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, ed. Muhammad Baqir al-Mahmudi, Muassasat al-Alami lil-Matbuat, Beirut, 1st ed., 1974, vol. 4, p. 21.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, vol. 9, p. 339.

¹¹ Abd al-Rahman al-Suhayli, *Al-Rawd al-Unuf fi Sharh al-Sira al-Nabawiyya li-Ibn Hisham*, ed. Umar Abd al-Salam al-Salami, Dar Ihya al-Turath al-Arabi, Beirut, 1st ed., 2000, vol. 3, p. 183.

¹² Al-Zubayri, previously cited, vol. 1, p. 110.

¹³ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 269.

Abi Sufyan of the Umayyad house.¹ Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) later married Umama, the daughter of Abu al-As ibn al-Rabi and Zaynab, the daughter of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him).²

Despite these friendly relations, which were often strengthened by tribal solidarity, tensions also arose. The most important cause was social competition for honor and leadership within Quraysh. This rivalry produced formal contests between leading figures of the two branches. One of the best-known examples in the pre-Islamic period involved Harb ibn Umayya and Abd al-Muttalib ibn Hashim. A Jewish merchant from Najran traded in the markets of Tihama under the protection of Abd al-Muttalib. Harb became resentful and incited young men of Quraysh to kill the merchant. Abd al-Muttalib demanded compensation for his protected neighbor. The two men agreed to submit their dispute to the Negus, king of Abyssinia, but he declined to arbitrate. They then appointed Nufayl ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Ribah ibn Adi, who ruled in favor of Abd al-Muttalib. Harb ibn Umayya lost one hundred camels in the contest. According to the account, this produced the first serious estrangement between the two parties.³

Competition over prestige remained intense until the mission of the Prophet (peace be upon him). At that point, the balance shifted in favor of the Hashimites. The Umayyads nevertheless continued to seek opportunities to recover their earlier influence.

3. The Umayyads' Position toward the Emergence of Islam

Umayyad attitudes toward the Islamic mission differed considerably. Some opposed it. One of the most prominent was Abu Uhayha Said ibn al-As, who lived to see Islam but rejected the new message. Others openly opposed the Prophet (peace be upon him) and sought to obstruct the spread of Islam, and many of them were killed at the Battle of Badr. Some Umayyad women also opposed the mission, including Umm Jamil bint Harb ibn Umayya, the wife of Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd al-Muttalib, whom the Quran describes as "the carrier of firewood," and Hind bint Utba. Opposition was not limited to the Umayyads. Some members of Banu Hashim also opposed the call of the Prophet (peace be upon him) in its early phase, especially his uncle Abu Lahab, who is condemned in the Quran.

By contrast, many members of the Umayyad family were among the early converts to Islam. Some migrated to Abyssinia to protect their faith and themselves from persecution and torture. Foremost among them were Uthman ibn Affan and Khalid ibn Said ibn al-As, who migrated to Abyssinia. Khalid's brother Amr ibn Said embraced Islam after him and later joined him there as an emigrant.⁴ Ramla bint Abi Sufyan, known as Umm Habiba, also embraced Islam and migrated with her husband Abd Allah ibn Zayd. After her husband died, the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) married her while she was in Abyssinia, and the Negus, king of Abyssinia, gave her in marriage to the Prophet.⁵

Other Umayyads converted before the conquest of Mecca, although their conversion came somewhat later. Among them was al-Hakam ibn Said ibn al-As, whom the Prophet (peace be upon him) renamed Abd Allah. Aban ibn Said ibn al-As embraced Islam after the Treaty of Hudaibiyya.⁶ He had previously granted protection to Uthman ibn Affan when Uthman was sent by the Prophet (peace be upon him) to Quraysh during the Hudaibiyya negotiations.⁷

Some leading Umayyads initially opposed the mission and later embraced Islam. The best known include Abu Sufyan; his wife Hind bint Utba ibn Rabia; their sons Muawiya, Yazid, Utba, and Anbasah; al-Hakam ibn Abi al-As; al-Walid ibn Uqba ibn Abi Muayt; Said ibn Said ibn al-As; Attab ibn Asid ibn Abi al-Is; and Abd Allah ibn Amir ibn Kurayz.⁸ The women of the Umayyad branch and the wives of its leading men also embraced Islam, with Hind bint Utba among the most prominent.

4. The Role of the Umayyads in Public Life in Early Islam

The Umayyads played important roles in the emerging Islamic polity from the time of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) to the end of the Rashidun Caliphate. Their large numbers were one factor. Their kinship and marital ties with Banu Hashim were another. Their willingness to support the Islamic cause also contributed to their prominence. For these reasons, members of Banu Umayya assumed significant roles during the life of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) and the era of the Rightly Guided Caliphs.

¹ Ibid., vol. 1, p. 440.

² Muhammad ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Istiab fi Marifat al-Ashab*, ed. Ali Muhammad al-Bajawi, Dar al-Jil, Beirut, 1st ed., vol. 4, p. 1789.

³ Al-Zubayri, previously cited, vol. 1, p. 90.

⁴ Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, vol. 1, p. 199.

⁵ Ibn Sad, *Al-Tabaqat*, vol. 8, p. 76.

⁶ Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba fi Marifat al-Sahaba*, ed. Ali Muhammad Muawwad and Adil Ahmad Abd al-Mawjud, Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, 1st ed., 1994, vol. 1, p. 148.

⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *Usd al-Ghaba fi Marifat al-Sahaba*, vol. 1, p. 148.

⁸ Ibn Habib al-Baghdadi, *Al-Munammaq fi Akhbar Quraysh*, vol. 1, p. 422.

1.4. During the Prophetic Period

After the conquest of Mecca in 8 AH/619 CE, most clans and individuals of Quraysh embraced Islam, with only a small number of leaders remaining outside it.¹ All members of the Umayyad family converted after their leading figure, Abu Sufyan Sakhr ibn Harb ibn Umayya, then a chief of Quraysh, embraced Islam. Banu Umayya did not merely enter Islam. They also showed enthusiasm for serving the new religion, in part to compensate for the lateness of their conversion. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) appointed Umayyad figures to several public functions. Their large numbers, experience in trade and finance, military knowledge, and ability to build social relations made them suitable for such responsibilities. They therefore held several offices and played roles in different areas of public life. In military affairs, Umayyads took part in expeditions and campaigns led or dispatched by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him), and some were killed in them. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) appointed Aban ibn Said ibn al-As to command an expedition to Najd.² Umayyads also participated in campaigns such as Uhud, while Uthman played an important role in the Treaty of Hudaibiyya and the expedition to Tabuk.³ After the conquest of Mecca and the conversion of the Quraysh clans, Umayyad figures took part in the Battle of Hunayn. Abu Sufyan and his sons Muawiya and Yazid participated and received substantial shares of the spoils. They also took part in the campaign of al-Taif in the following year.⁴ The sons of Said ibn al-As participated as well, and al-Hakam ibn Abi al-As al-Umawi was killed. The Prophet (peace be upon him) also entrusted Umayyads with financial offices, especially the collection of zakat. Abu Sufyan was placed in charge of the zakat of al-Taif⁵ and Najran.⁶ Said ibn Said ibn al-As was appointed over the market of Mecca.⁷ Al-Walid ibn Uqba was placed in charge of the zakat of Banu al-Mustaliq,⁸ while Khalid ibn Said ibn al-As was assigned the zakat of Murad, Zubayd, and Madhhij in Yemen.

Umayyads were also appointed to administrative and political posts. Abu Sufyan was appointed over Najran.⁹ Amr ibn Said ibn al-As was placed over Arab and Jewish settlements, namely Fadak, Khayr, and Tabuk.¹⁰ Aban ibn Said ibn al-As was appointed over al-Khatt in Bahrain, from which the well-known Khatti spears took their name.¹¹ Al-Hakam ibn Said ibn al-As was also placed over Arab settlements.¹² Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan was appointed over Tayma, near Tabuk in the northern Hijaz.¹³ Attab ibn Asid ibn Abi al-Is ibn Umayya was appointed over Mecca and was given two dirhams per day.¹⁴ Khalid ibn Said ibn al-As ibn Umayya was appointed over Sanaa, although another report states that he was placed in charge of the zakat of Yemen.¹⁵ This report is supported by the account that the well-known warrior Amr ibn Madi Karib al-Zubaydi gave him his sword, al-Samsama.¹⁶ Several Umayyads also served as scribes of revelation, including Uthman ibn Affan, Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan,¹⁷ Khalid ibn Said ibn al-As,¹⁸ Aban ibn Said ibn al-As, and Abd Allah ibn Abi Sarh, Uthman's foster brother.¹⁹

¹ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 4, p. 322.

² Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar Alam al-Nubala*, edited by a group of scholars under the supervision of Shaykh Shuayb al-Arnaut, Muassasat al-Risala, 3rd ed., 1985, vol. 3, p. 161.

³ Ahmad ibn Yahya al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, Dar wa-Maktabat al-Hilal, Beirut, Lebanon, 1988, p. 67.

⁴ Ibn Hisham, *Al-Sira al-Nabawiyya*, vol. 2, p. 478.

⁵ Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, vol. 5, p. 7.

⁶ *Ibid.*, vol. 5, p. 7.

⁷ Ali al-Sallabi, *Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan*, Dar al-Andalus al-Jadida lil-Nashr wa-l-Tawzi, Egypt, 1st ed., 2008, vol. 1, p. 48.

⁸ Abu al-Faraj Abd al-Rahman ibn Ali ibn Muhammad Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Umam wa-l-Muluk*, ed. Muhammad Abd al-Qadir Ata and Mustafa Abd al-Qadir Ata, 1st ed., Dar al-Kutub al-Ilmiyya, Beirut, 1992, vol. 6, p. 4.

⁹ Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, vol. 3, p. 136.

¹⁰ Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Istiab fi Marifat al-Ashab*, vol. 3, p. 1178. 432

¹¹ Ibn Hazm, previously cited, vol. 1, p. 81.

¹² Ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Ibn Khayyat*, p. 97.

¹³ Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, vol. 1, p. 44.

¹⁴ Al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, vol. 1, p. 364.

¹⁵ Ibn Sad, *Al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 735.

¹⁶ Abd Allah ibn Qutayba al-Dinawari, *Al-Maarif*, ed. Tharwat Ukasha, Egyptian General Book Organization, Cairo, 2nd ed., 1992, vol. 1, p. 196.

¹⁷ Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar Alam al-Nubala*, vol. 3, p. 123.

¹⁸ Ibn Sad, *Al-Tabaqat*, vol. 1, p. 203.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 448.

Overall, the Prophet employed nine men from the Umayyad house and entrusted them with senior positions. They were therefore the Quraysh branch most frequently employed by the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) in his emerging state.

This raises an important question: why did the Prophet (peace be upon him) employ members of Banu Umayya and others in public functions while making less use of his own relatives from Banu Hashim, especially his numerous cousins, many of whom had embraced Islam early and had supported the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him)?

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not generally appoint his relatives from Banu Hashim to administrative functions. Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was the exception. The Prophet (peace be upon him) gave him the banner at Khaybar and employed him as a scribe of revelation. Members of Banu Hashim also participated in the campaigns led by the Prophet (peace be upon him), including Badr and Uhud, where his uncle Hamza ibn Abd al-Muttalib (may Allah be pleased with him) was martyred.¹ His reliance on Banu Umayya, leading men of Quraysh, and other Muslims rather than on his Hashimite relatives may be explained by the following reasons:

1. Banu Umayya had a large number of adult men compared with many other groups. They also possessed extensive experience acquired through trade and travel. This gave them skill in building social relations and managing financial matters. In addition, many had held military, commercial, administrative, and political responsibilities before Islam and during its early period. By contrast, Banu Hashim had been more closely associated with religious functions, especially the provision of water and food to pilgrims in the pre-Islamic and early Islamic periods.

2. Financial offices related to the collection of zakat were not available to Ahl al-Bayt (may Allah be pleased with them) because zakat was prohibited for them, while the collector received a share from the funds collected.

3. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) did not appoint members of his household to offices during his lifetime. This was so that Arabs and non-Arabs would not think that his prophethood was being extended into hereditary rule. Kings, by contrast, commonly appoint relatives to positions of authority and designate heirs from within their own families.

2.4. During the Rashidun Period

1.2.4. During the Caliphate of Abu Bakr al-Siddiq (may Allah be pleased with him)

Abu Bakr (may Allah be pleased with him) assumed the caliphate after the death of the Prophet (peace be upon him), despite opposition from some Umayyads, especially Abu Sufyan. His short caliphate witnessed the Ridda wars, during which Muawiya took part in the decisive Battle of al-Yamama.² After the Ridda movement was suppressed, Abu Bakr turned his attention to expansion, especially toward al-Sham. He entrusted several Quraysh leaders with military banners, including two Umayyads. Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan received a banner for the campaign toward Damascus,³ while Khalid ibn Said ibn al-As was given a command for al-Sham. Khalid was killed at the Battle of Marj al-Suffar in 14 AH/644 CE.⁴ Umayyads participated actively in the campaigns in al-Sham, particularly at Yarmuk. Abu Sufyan took part and helped strengthen the morale of the fighters. Muawiya also participated in the conquests of al-Sham. He was placed in command of reinforcements sent to support the army⁵ and took part in several campaigns in the region.

During Abu Bakr's caliphate, the sons of Said ibn al-As declined to continue in their former offices. They explained that they would not serve any caliph after the Messenger of God (peace be upon him), saying: "We shall never work for anyone after the Messenger of God (peace be upon him)."⁶ They instead devoted themselves to fighting in al-Sham. Many descendants of Said ibn al-As were killed there, to the point that it was said: "No district in al-Sham was conquered without a man from Banu Said ibn al-As being found dead there."⁷ Although the statement is clearly hyperbolic, many Umayyads, especially descendants of Said ibn al-As, were killed in the Syrian conquests. Al-Walid ibn Uqba also participated in those campaigns.

The Umayyad role under Abu Bakr was therefore concentrated mainly in the military sphere. This reflected the character of his reign, which was dominated by the Ridda wars and the early conquests. It also reflected the brevity of his caliphate, which lasted only two years.

2.2.4. During the Caliphate of Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him)

Umar ibn al-Khattab succeeded Abu Bakr by designation. He did not dismiss the Umayyad governors and, in some cases, expanded their authority. This reflected the military contribution they had made since the conquest of Mecca. It also reflected Umar's policy of building the Islamic state and developing its administrative, military, financial, political, and economic institutions. He needed individuals with experience in social, financial, economic, and military affairs, and several

¹ Ibn Hisham, *Sira Ibn Hisham*, vol. 2, p. 61.

² Some historians mention that Muawiya was the one who killed Musaylima al-Kadhdhab. See Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 8, p. 125.

³ Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, vol. 1, p. 112.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 1, p. 112.

⁵ Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, vol. 3, p. 391.

⁶ Ihsan Sidqi, previously cited, p. 72.

⁷ Ibn Abd al-Barr, *Al-Istiab fi Marifat al-Ashab*, vol. 2, p. 423.

Umayyads possessed such experience. Umar therefore relied on many Quraysh figures, including Umayyads, who served in different fields. Yazid ibn Abi Sufyan remained a commander in al-Sham and an assistant to the commander-in-chief Abu Ubayda al-Jarrah. After Abu Ubayda died in the plague of Amwas, Yazid was appointed over the military district of Damascus.¹ Yazid continued the conquest of coastal cities in al-Sham, including Acre, Antioch, and Tripoli, together with his brother Muawiya, who commanded the right wing.² Umar later entrusted Muawiya with the conquest of Caesarea,³ which he successfully completed. After Yazid died in the plague of Amwas, Umar appointed Muawiya in his place.⁴ Other Umayyad figures continued to participate actively in campaigns on several fronts. Uqba ibn Abi Muayt took part in the conquests of al-Sham. Said ibn al-As participated in campaigns in al-Sham and Iraq and contributed to the conquest of Tabaristan and Jurjan.⁵ His brother Said ibn Khalid ibn Said ibn al-As was killed at Yarmuk. Umayyads also received administrative and political appointments. Utba ibn Abi Sufyan was appointed over Kinana,⁶ while Mahriz ibn Haritha ibn Rabia ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd Shams was appointed over al-Taif, or according to another account, Mecca.⁷ The wider house of Abd Shams was allied with Banu Umayya and was linked to them through kinship, marriage, alliance, and tribal solidarity, as both descended from Abd Shams ibn Abd Manaf.

A further question arises: why did Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with him) rely on Umayyad figures even though many had embraced Islam relatively late and even though other Companions possessed earlier service, experience, and distinction, including Abd al-Rahman ibn Awf, Sad ibn Abi Waqqas, al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam, and Zayd ibn Said?

Through my analysis and tracing of the events, I conclude that Caliph Umar ibn al-Khattab relied on the converts of the conquest, and on the Umayyads in particular, for the following reasons:

1. The converts of the conquest, including the Umayyads, wished to compensate for their late conversion and for their earlier opposition to the Islamic mission. They therefore participated in the conquests in search of religious reward and martyrdom, while also seeking to make amends for their earlier failure to support the Prophet (peace be upon him) and to respond to the service of the Islamic state.

2. The Umayyads had accumulated substantial experience in warfare, trade, and political affairs during the pre-Islamic period. They refined this experience during the Prophet's lifetime and during the caliphates of Abu Bakr and Umar (may Allah be pleased with them both).

3. Umar followed a policy of rotating men through different offices and responsibilities. He sometimes appointed younger Companions while leaving aside more famous figures who were regarded as superior to them. This was because younger Companions were capable of carrying out the work and mastering it, and because Caliph Umar was able to supervise them closely, given their awe of him.⁸ When he was asked why he did not appoint some of the senior Companions, he said: "I dislike soiling them with administrative duties."

Although Umar relied on Umayyads and assigned them important responsibilities, he did not grant them special privileges. He gave precedence in stipends and access to those who had embraced Islam earlier.⁹ He also disciplined those who violated his instructions, including senior Umayyad figures. He punished anyone who violated his instructions, including their leading figure Abu Sufyan, whom he imprisoned despite his advanced age, and he also reproached Muawiya. Umar further recommended that some members of the group be excluded from certain offices.¹⁰

3.2.4. During the Caliphate of Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him)

Uthman became caliph after the death of Umar. His rule was a continuation of the Rashidun period and not the rule of the Umayyad family, as many opponents of the Umayyads claim. Nevertheless, his caliphate marked the height of Umayyad influence during the Rashidun era and the beginning of their stronger political ambitions. Uthman was known for affection toward his relatives and for granting them privileges. He appointed many members of his family to major military, political, religious, and financial positions. Some governed important provinces, where governors exercised extensive powers, includ-

¹ Khalifa ibn Khayyat, previously cited source, vol. 1, p. 138.

² Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Umam wa-l-Muluk*, vol. 4, p. 116.

³ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 7, p. 96.

⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 8, p. 124.

⁵ Ibn al-Jawzi, *Al-Muntazam fi Tarikh al-Umam wa-l-Muluk*, vol. 4, p. 254.

⁶ Al-Tabari, *Tarikh al-Tabari*, vol. 4, p. 220.

⁷ Ibn al-Athir, *Ud al-Ghaba fi Marifat al-Sahaba*, vol. 4, p. 295.

⁸ Ihsan Sidqi al-Amad, previously cited, p. 86.

⁹ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 2, p. 331.

¹⁰ Caliph Umar recommended that the sons of Uqba ibn Abi Muayt be prevented from assuming responsibilities. Ali and Talha reminded Uthman of this when he appointed al-Walid ibn Uqba ibn Abi Muayt, saying to him: "Did Umar not instruct you not to place the family of Abi Muayt and Banu Umayya over the people?" He gave them no answer. See al-Baladhuri, *Ansab al-Ashraf*, vol. 5, p. 517.

ing revenue collection, implementation of caliphal policy, military command, and the dispatch of campaigns. Umayyad governors continued the conquests. In Egypt, Abd Allah ibn Abi Sarh led the campaign into Ifriqiya.¹ He also confronted Byzantine attacks on the Egyptian coast and defeated them in the naval Battle of the Masts.² Muawiya continued military operations in al-Sham and led numerous naval campaigns as well as summer and winter expeditions. He conquered several cities and islands, notably Rhodes and Cyprus.³ He is also credited with the Muslims taking to the sea.⁴ He confronted Byzantine land and naval attacks along the Syrian coast and established frontier posts and ribats.⁵ Uthman also appointed his maternal cousin Abd Allah ibn Amir, from Banu Abd Shams, over Iraq. Abd Allah continued the eastern conquests. He conquered Tabaristan,⁶ Persia in 29 AH/649 CE,⁷ Merv in 34 AH/654 CE,⁸ as well as Sijistan, Kabul, and Khurasan.⁹

After Said ibn al-As was appointed over Kufa in 30 AH/650 CE, he continued to dispatch expeditions toward the east. He campaigned in Tabaristan in 31 AH/651 CE and continued to send military forces to the eastern frontier. Umayyads took part in many of these operations, especially the summer and winter campaigns, and also participated in expeditions against islands off the Syrian coast.

A notable feature of Uthman's appointment policy was his reliance on members of his family and his assignment of major responsibilities to them. He placed all of al-Sham under Muawiya.¹⁰ He removed Sad ibn Abi Waqqas from Kufa and appointed al-Walid ibn Uqba ibn Abi Muayt in his place. He appointed Abd Allah ibn Amir ibn Kurayz over Basra and dismissed Abu Musa al-Ashari.¹¹ He removed Amr ibn al-As from Egypt and replaced him with his foster brother Abd Allah ibn Abi Sarh al-Amiri.¹² He also dismissed al-Mughira ibn Shuba al-Thaqafi from Basra and later appointed al-Walid ibn Uqba ibn Abi Muayt, a decision that intensified opposition to him.¹³ Uthman appointed his cousin Marwan ibn al-Hakam as his scribe and adviser, granted him a share of the spoils of Ifriqiya,¹⁴ and married him to his sister. He also granted agricultural lands in Iraq, Egypt, and al-Sham to a number of Companions, including several members of the Umayyad family.¹⁵ Umayyad figures were thus able to own extensive lands and estates, accumulate wealth, and exercise influence within the machinery of government. In general, the reign of Uthman ibn Affan was the golden age of Umayyad influence in government during the Rashidun era. They used the caliph's qualities to enter the machinery of government and to aspire to assume the caliphate.¹⁶

Some rebels eventually rose against Uthman and killed him. Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) then assumed the caliphate and adopted a policy that differed from that of his predecessors, particularly in his dealings with the Umayyads. This raises the question of Ali's policy toward Banu Umayya and their response to it.

4.2.4. The Umayyads during the Caliphate of Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him)

After the martyrdom of Caliph Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him), Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was pledged allegiance as caliph in exceptional circumstances. The new caliph understood that Uthman's reliance on relatives had been one cause of public resentment. He therefore sought to dismiss all of Uthman's governors, including those from the Umayyad house. All accepted the decision except Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan, governor of al-Sham. Muawiya rejected dismissal and strengthened his position by demanding retribution for Uthman from those responsible for his death.¹⁷ Several Companions, including al-Zubayr ibn al-Awwam, Talha ibn Ubayd Allah, and Lady Aisha (may Allah be pleased with them), also supported the demand for retribution. The dispute developed into armed conflict at the Battle of

¹ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 7, p. 151.

² Ibid., vol. 10, p. 649.

³ Ibid., vol. 7, p. 127.

⁴ Ali al-Sallabi, *Al-Dawla al-Umawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 347.

⁵ Khalifa ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Ibn Khayyat*, p. 178.

⁶ Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, p. 326.

⁷ Ibid., p. 307.

⁸ Ibn Qutayba, *Al-Maarif*, vol. 1, p. 194.

⁹ Al-Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, p. 381.

¹⁰ Al-Dhahabi, *Siyar Alam al-Nubala*, vol. 2, p. 468.

¹¹ Khalifa ibn Khayyat, *Tarikh Ibn Khayyat*, p. 178.

¹² Al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam*, vol. 2, p. 485.

¹³ Ibn al-Jawzi, previously cited source, vol. 5, p. 7.

¹⁴ Ibn al-Wardi, *Tarikh Ibn al-Wardi*, vol. 1, p. 145.

¹⁵ Al-Sallabi, *Al-Dawla al-Umawiyya*, vol. 1, p. 260.

¹⁶ When Uthman ibn Affan (may Allah be pleased with him) was pledged allegiance as caliph, Abu Sufyan rejoiced and is attributed with urging Banu Umayya to take the caliphate, saying: "Seize it, O Banu Umayya, as a ball is seized, for the matter is not as you say." See Ihsan Sidqi al-Amad, previously cited, p. 90.

¹⁷ Ibn Kathir, *Al-Bidaya wa-l-Nihaya*, previously cited, vol. 7, p. 258.

the Camel between Ali's supporters and the Companions and their followers who demanded retribution.¹ Several Umayyad figures participated. Among them was Marwan ibn al-Hakam, who killed Talha ibn Ubayd Allah,² as well as Attab ibn Asid, who was also killed in the battle. After this confrontation, Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) prepared to fight the forces of al-Sham led by Muawiya ibn Abi Sufyan and his ally Amr ibn al-As, together with other Quraysh figures such as al-Dahhak ibn Qays al-Fihri and Ubayd Allah ibn Umar ibn al-Khattab. Some Umayyads, including Marwan ibn al-Hakam and Said ibn al-As, withdrew from the civil conflict and did not take part in this confrontation. Muawiya, however, remained committed to the cause of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him), together with the Companions and the people of al-Sham who supported him.

Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) dismissed Uthman's Umayyad governors and assistants and relied instead on several members of his own Hashimite family. He appointed Abd Allah ibn Abbas governor of Basra,³ Ubayd Allah ibn Abbas over Yemen,⁴ and Qutham ibn Abbas over Mecca and al-Taif.⁵ He also made his son al-Hasan an adviser. These appointments intensified polarization between the Hashimite and Umayyad houses and contributed to a political struggle over the caliphate. Victory ultimately favored Muawiya after Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) was martyred in Kufa at the hand of a Kharijite.

Although al-Hasan was pledged allegiance as successor to his father, he inherited a difficult political situation. He chose reconciliation and relinquished the caliphate in favor of Muawiya.⁶ Muawiya later confined succession to the Umayyad family by introducing hereditary designation of an heir.

5. Conclusion

The Umayyad family played an important social, political, and economic role in the pre-Islamic period and during the formative decades of Islam. Leading members of Banu Umayya were prominent in several fields, especially politics, warfare, and economic life.

Umayyad attitudes toward Islam and the call of the Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) ranged from early conversion and participation in spreading the message to hostility and severe harm against the Prophet and the Muslims. By the conquest of Mecca, however, all members of Banu Umayya had embraced Islam. They remained committed during the Ridda wars and took part in suppressing them.

The Umayyad family also played an important role during the Prophetic period. The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) appointed several of its leading men to administrative, political, and military positions. Their large numbers were one factor, while their experience in military and administrative affairs was another. Their standing within Quraysh, both before and after Islam, also contributed to their prominence. Umayyads subsequently assumed important military, financial, and administrative positions under Abu Bakr and Umar ibn al-Khattab (may Allah be pleased with them both). Umar expanded the responsibilities of some of them despite his strong personality, political foresight, and reputation for judging men carefully. Muawiya was the most prominent example: Umar appointed him over al-Sham and expanded his responsibilities despite the presence of others who surpassed him in competence and precedence in Islam.

The reign of Uthman (may Allah be pleased with him) was the high point of Umayyad influence in the institutions of the caliphate. Members of the family came to control major provinces, especially Egypt, al-Sham, and Iraq. The conduct of some governors from the Umayyad house were among the causes of public resentment against him and his killing. Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) pursued the opposite policy and removed Umayyad figures from public offices. This exclusion contributed to civil conflict and military confrontation, which accelerated the end of the Rashidun Caliphate and the rise of the Umayyad Caliphate.

The Rashidun period alone did not prepare the way for the Umayyads to reach the caliphate. The Prophet (peace be upon him) himself had employed members of the family, and Umayyads were among the more numerous officials serving him at the time of his death.

The caliphs should have relied on the Umayyads within limits, as the Prophet (peace be upon him) and the two caliphs Abu Bakr and Umar did after him. They should neither have enabled them to dominate, as Uthman did, nor excluded them

¹ Sayf ibn Umar, *Al-Fitna wa-Mawqi at al-Jamal*, ed. Ahmad Ratib Armush, Dar al-Nafais, Jordan, 1993. Some men of Banu Umayya and their cousins from Banu Abd Shams participated in this battle, and three men were killed: Abd al-Rahman ibn Attab ibn Asid from Banu Umayya; Abd al-Rahman ibn Abd Allah ibn Amir from Banu Habib ibn Abd Shams; and Ali ibn Adi ibn Mihriz ibn Haritha ibn Rabia ibn Abd al-Uzza ibn Abd Shams. See al-Dhahabi, *Tarikh al-Islam*, vol. 3, p. 536.

² Ali Muhammad Muhammad al-Sallabi, *Asma al-Matalib fi Sirat Amir al-Muminin Ali ibn Abi Talib (Shakhsiyatuhu wa-Asruhu - Dirasah Shamilah)*, Maktabat al-Sahaba, Sharjah, United Arab Emirates, 2004, vol. 1, p. 579.

³ Ibn Asakir, *Tarikh Dimashq*, vol. 19, p. 170.

⁴ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 2, p. 566.

⁵ *Ibid.*, vol. 2, p. 582.

⁶ Ibn al-Athir, *Al-Kamil*, vol. 2, p. 582.

completely from every role, as Caliph Ali ibn Abi Talib (may Allah be pleased with him) did. Banu Umayya formed one of the strongest kin groups in Quraysh, and many of its members possessed considerable administrative, military, and political ability.

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